

**WORK-PLACEMENT ASSESSMENT
AS A LIVED-THROUGH EDUCATIONALLY MEANINGFUL
EXPERIENCE OF THE STUDENT:
An application of the phenomenological descriptive
approach**

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AUTHORSHIP

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

This thesis is an outcome of the Joint Doctoral Supervision Agreement (Cotutelle) between Macquarie University and University of Lapland. The original research data were collected in Finland, and the ethical and governance approvals were allocated according to the Finnish system through separate approvals from the two participant organizations (illustrated in Appendix D).

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Signature

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, a phenomenological descriptive method was applied to an empirical study, for the clarification of the lived-through educationally meaningful experience in student assessment, related to a work-placement and higher educational context. As an account for an essential structural description in generating scientific knowledge, the study increases understanding of the phenomenon of interest by giving insight into the direct assessment experience and its key constituents, using verbal expressions and acts of consciousness as the medium for accessing the situation of the other, and describing it exactly as experienced as a presence for the experiencer, from an educational perspective.

At the beginning of the study, the researcher assumed the attitude of phenomenological scientific reduction and an educational perspective, while being mindfully sensitive to the type of phenomenon being researched. By turning to others, the study began by obtaining concrete descriptions of experiences from those who had lived through situations in which the phenomenon of interest had taken place. The participants of the study were sixteen undergraduate physiotherapy students from two higher education institutions in Finland. At both schools, periods of work-placement alternated with academic study blocks throughout the problem-based course curriculum, and supervised work-placements all together formed almost one fourth of the whole study program. The raw data of the study consisted of audible expressions of the participants' retrospective descriptions about aspects of living through the work-placement assessment process, as they had experienced it.

After transcribing the audible expressions, verbatim, into individually constituted descriptions of the students' lived-through experiences, the researcher, by maintaining the assumed attitude, then analyzed the material according to the descriptive phenomenological method developed by Amedeo Giorgi on the basis of the phenomenological philosophy and method of Edmund Husserl. The findings and implications of the study hence account for the results of a second-order description by the researcher, based on the adoption of the phenomenological scientific attitude and reduction, the method of free imaginative variation, and the use of intentional (signifying-fulfilling-identifying) acts of consciousness. The applied phenomenological analysis consisted of five steps: (1) going through the concrete descriptions in order

to get a sense of the whole, (2) constituting meaning units within the descriptions, (3) transforming the constituted meaning units into phenomenologically and educationally sensitive expressions, (4) synthesizing the transformed meaning units into one unifying structure, and (5) determining variations and dynamics among the key constituents that comprised the structure.

The phenomenological analysis of the data showed that a distinguishable chain of events could be discerned, that the participants of the study identified positively and/or negatively meaningful experiences in assessment, carrying a great deal of personal and educational significance for the student. What constitutes the most essential aspect of the living through of the educationally meaningful experience in work-placement assessment, in this study, is the intention of the student to obtain self-knowledge through assessment encounters, and the sense of fulfillment of that subjective self-interest. Once the awareness of the self-interest is awakened in the student, the other necessary constituents become possible. These were discovered to be: resemblance of assumptions and practice, sense of shared interest/s, reliance on self and others, sense of safety and openness, sense of emotional engagement, sense of enhancement and support, and challenge to assumptions and self-interest. The thesis concludes by presenting the implications drawn from the findings of the phenomenological empirical investigation.

Keywords: lived experience, student assessment process, work-placements, higher education, descriptive phenomenological method

PREFACE

The genesis of the phenomenological study involved in this doctoral thesis was the totality of my own lived experiences and interests in the field of assessment. Having been a practitioner for more than ten years in the fields of physiotherapy and higher education, I have a great deal of experience of assessment in both contexts. Initially, my interest in assessment, as a form of clinical judgment, was directed towards the assessment of motor behaviour. Whilst becoming a teacher in physiotherapy, and doing my Master's degree in Health Sciences, I then became more and more fascinated by the educational and pedagogical aspects of assessment. Involved with further academic studies, and working as an educator, I also became intrigued by the wide spectrum of pedagogical challenges encountered in higher education and curriculum development, particularly when related to student assessment, and learning and teaching in professional practice settings (see Vuoskoski, 2004, 2005, 2006; S. Poikela¹, Vuoskoski & Kärnä, 2009).

Grounded in the combination of my personal, professional and research interests, my aim in this study is to gain a better understanding of student assessment, as a phenomenon in higher education, and particularly when implemented within work-placement settings. One of the key questions concerning the implementation of student assessment in higher education is whether the goals and practices, including assessment, actually are in line with the applied pedagogical assumptions, particularly those related to the enhancement of the learning and development of the student, to meet the standards for an academic award as well as the requirements of contemporary and future work environments. These are also my concerns as an educator, and as a representative of the physiotherapy profession. However, as a researcher with a phenomenological orientation to assessment, the most fundamental question for me is: *how is student assessment experienced by those living at its heart?* Hence, in this research, my aim is to achieve a better understanding of assessment as a lived-through experience of the undergraduate student, by means of a phenomenological descriptive study.

¹ Quotations to A. Giorgi and B. Giorgi as well as E. Poikela, P. Poikela, and S. Poikela, in this thesis include their initials to differentiate between the authors.

Yet, before focusing on the study, I would like to highlight some events that were meaningful to me during the PhD and overall study processes related to this research. At the beginning of the process, I had over ten years involvement with assessment in higher education, in the framework of the undergraduate physiotherapy curriculum, mainly in Finland, but also in the context of international exchange programmes. I became acquainted with the phenomenological approach while working on my Master's thesis (2004), at the University of Jyväskylä, and a professional development degree in problem-based learning (PBL) and pedagogy (2005), at the University of Tampere. During that time, I became especially fascinated by the place given to description and lived experiences in phenomenological thought. After these experiences, I became even more interested in exploring the phenomena of the subjective lifeworld, although I found systematic and rigorous application of the phenomenological method challenging and beyond my own skills as a researcher. Therefore, at the beginning of my doctoral studies, I felt my own understanding of the different variations of phenomenology and their philosophical legitimacy was fairly limited.

To learn that it is difficult, or impossible, to give a univocal definition of the phenomenological philosophy that is sufficiently comprehensive to include its varied interpretations in different research traditions did not really ease my confusion as a newcomer, trying to develop a better understanding of phenomenological thought and tradition. After learning that one could also find several, and often contradictory, interpretations of the work and texts of Edmund Husserl, who has been named as the founder of phenomenological philosophy in the modern sense of the term (see Spiegelberg, 1994) I was more than ever puzzled. Even Husserl himself seemed to have severe doubts about whether his concepts and writings were understood correctly by his followers (see Dreyfus & Hall, 1985). Husserl also constantly revised his former thoughts and the tenets of his phenomenological philosophy (see Mohanty 1985). Hence, sometimes the challenge to a novice researcher, and a newcomer in the field of phenomenology, presented itself as almost too overwhelming.

Later in the process, whilst defining the foundations and the use of the phenomenological method for this study, the central point for me was to gain a better understanding of the two approaches in phenomenological tradition, the descriptive and the interpretative. Finally, it became a question of choosing my own position,

within the debate; was it legitimate and justifiable to integrate the descriptive and the interpretative approaches to phenomenology, or would it be better to give primacy to one of them? Since the decision was then made in favour of the primarily descriptive stance in phenomenology, the preliminary assumption in this work is that descriptive phenomenology offers a legitimate and rigorous method for the exploration of assessment as a subjective lifeworld phenomenon, and as an object and 'presence' to the consciousness of the experiencer, from an educational perspective.

Before moving on to the study, there is still one part of the thesis process I need to mention. Since becoming a Cotutelle student and doing my PhD thesis within a joint degree program between Macquarie University, in Australia, and the University of Lapland, in Finland, I have been working within two university programs with a team of supervisors. During this period, while remaining as a PhD candidate at the University of Lapland, I spent approximately one year and three months in Sydney, studying at Macquarie University. This could have been a severe challenge, and probably, in a way, it was, but it was a great opportunity as well. I had to reorganize my work to fit in the context of both universities and the thesis examination systems of the two countries. However, I believe that it was exactly because of these challenges that my research became better structured. I first had to familiarize myself with the similarities and differences between the two systems and the two universities, and the thoughts and expectations of my Finnish and Australian supervisors. By putting all of that together, as a working framework, I then recreated an action plan with realistic and achievable goals, and as manageable a timeline as possible. Of course, many readjustments were made all the way through, but having a clear framework and action plan helped me to take the benefits from the situation as well, especially from the expertise of my supervisors. In that sense, the entire study process has been an exceptional experience and opportunity in the lifeworld of a mature PhD student, experiencing herself as a qualified physiotherapist and educationalist, and aiming to become a qualified researcher and phenomenologist.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Student assessment processes linked with work-placements and work-engaged learning opportunities are topical issues of the contemporary era, in the context of both higher education institutions and research internationally. The increasing demand for 'quality' and 'effectiveness' and 'evidence-based' practices in higher education, and for the development of 'valid', 'reliable', and 'effective' assessment practices is well documented, and the topic of assessing work-placements and professional practice is gaining prominence in different areas of professional and higher educational literature. Accordingly, there is a growing body of literature regarding work-placement experiences, also when related to the higher educational arena of health related occupations. However, less has been written on assessment processes and the lived-through experiences of assessment in those settings, or the meaning of assessment in general. In addition, there is notable variation in the field between the adopted conceptions of assessment, and the terminology in use, depending on the context of discussion.

Historically, education, as a field of study among other disciplines which developed in the 19th and 20th centuries, has largely adopted the conceptions and criteria of the mainstream sciences that dominated during those times. As a result, the dominance of the language and logic of positivist empirical research is still largely present in contemporary educational theory and practice (see Soltis, 1985; Ewell, 1991; Labaree, 1998). However, the adequacy of the natural science model is becoming more and more challenged in education as well as in the other fields of human and social sciences, while alternative (mainly qualitative) approaches to science have been developed, from which the increasing prominence of the explicitly interpretive approach is one example (see Shulman, 1986; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Labaree, 1998; Creswell, 2007). In this study, a phenomenological approach to science is followed, although a definitive articulation of the phenomenological theory of science is not yet a historical achievement (see Spiegelberg, 1994).

This research report entails a phenomenological enquiry into the lived experiences of the student assessment process related to work-placement, with an attempt to clarify the meaning of the experience from an educational perspective. To

assume such an approach requires that one goes to the ultimate source for all phenomenological research, namely 'the things themselves';² that is, all objects of the world as experienced through our consciousness, precisely as 'presences' to consciousness. This means that priority is given to the examination of concrete experiences of the phenomenon of interest from the perspective of those who are living and going through that experience. The phenomenological approach to education thus invites us to question the 'taken-for-granted' assumptions and previous understandings about whatever is presently 'given', in those specific settings, including all existing theories and scientific knowledge, and previous experiences of the experienced phenomenon.

While the concept of phenomenology is not new in the field of education, or the higher educational research arena of health occupations, the use of the term is often dubious, and not all of the alternatives of phenomenological inquiry that are available are in use. When one views the literature, it is noteworthy that sometimes no philosophical grounding is presented for a study which attempts to be 'phenomenological' (for example, O'Callaghan & Slevin, 2003; Shen & Spouse, 2007; Clouder & Toms, 2008; Delany & Bragge, 2009), and when the methodological legitimation for the phenomenological claim is presented, it is predominantly justified by the interpretive or hermeneutic traditions in phenomenology (for example, Chikotas, 2009; Asghar, 2012; Wilson, 2014). However, in the process of accounting to a phenomenon based on hermeneutical (or interpretive) phenomenological stance, intended or expressed meanings (of 'texts') are interpreted (see Kvale, 1983), based on a plausible but contingent line of meaning attribution (see A. Giorgi, 1992). What follows is that although one is accounting for a phenomenon, one is aware that arguments for other accounts could also be given. The assumption in this study is that there is a difference between accounting for a presence that gives itself as 'uncertain', or 'plausible', and one that presents itself as 'precise' and 'fulfilling.'

In this study, the understanding of the educational phenomenon and how it can be studied is grounded in the descriptive phenomenological stance, and the use of the phenomenological method developed by Amedeo Giorgi based on the phenomenological philosophy of Edmund Husserl. Within the descriptive Husserlian

² Refers to Edmund Husserl's conviction of the "roots" or the "beginnings" of all knowledge (i.e., to its ultimate foundations) being found in the consciousness of the knowing subject, and accessed by means of the phenomenological reduction, bracketing, and use of the method of free imaginative variation (see Spiegelberg, 1994, 69-165).

approach, when compared to studies within the methodological mainstreams, a more radical approach is adopted towards phenomena, and how scientific knowledge of these phenomena can (or should) be produced. However, while applying the phenomenological approach to an empirical enquiry, in this study, it was assumed that a distinction between philosophical and scientific phenomenology needs to be made. Therefore, in the report in hand, attention is paid to the clarification of the use of the Husserlian phenomenological approach, the use of the core concepts as well as the method contained in that philosophy, and its empirical application.

The aim of the study is to produce phenomenological descriptive knowledge of student assessment experiences related to a work-placement, by the means of essential structural description, and regarding the student assessment process as a phenomenon for the consciousness of the experiencer. The essential structural description of a phenomenon, for Husserl (1970, 1983), means a view of phenomenology as a philosophy and as a descriptive science based upon intuitions of concrete “givens.” For Giorgi (1985, 1992, 2009), it means eidetic discoveries of invariant structure/s that can comprehend multiple situations. The latter view of phenomenology is followed in this study. Although Husserl’s focus was in phenomenological philosophical analysis and he sought general essences via transcendental phenomenological reduction, it is assumed that his ideas of the phenomenal world and essential relationships, offer a solid base for the methodical aims of this study: describing the contents of the concrete experiences of others as lived experiential meanings, seeking the structure of the experiences through determination of the most invariant and eidetic level meanings that belong to that structure, and making the study systematic and rigorous.

In the light of the previous research literature, it would not be true to say that there is no scientific, phenomenological or other theoretical knowledge available concerning the phenomenon of the student assessment process. However, more has been written on student assessment in classroom settings than related to work-placements. Nevertheless, the developments of the theories and conceptions of assessment are neither taken for granted nor accepted uncritically in this study. Nor is it the aim of the researcher of this study to apply any assumptive, hypothetical, or theoretical perspectives in the clarification of the phenomenon of interest. Yet, although calling into question all presuppositions, it is not assumed that adopting a theoretical framework for the phenomenon under examination would be harmful *per*

se, but that it could be harmful for the aims of phenomenological descriptive enterprise. Furthermore, it is not the intention of the researcher to belittle or criticize the achievements of the other research (for example, quantitative, or interpretive) approaches, but rather, by broadening the understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, to exemplify how descriptive phenomenology can be realized empirically in the field of education.

The thesis consists of eight main chapters. After the introduction, only the second and the seventh chapters include conceptual elaborations outside the context of the phenomenological conceptualization and the related methodological discussions focused on the analysis and findings of the empirical data. This structure follows the logic of the adopted descriptive phenomenological orientation in the forming of the scientific knowledge, and stresses the ideal of not committing to any theoretical presuppositions while discovering the experiential scientific knowledge as phenomena. Chapter two provides the general background and motivation for studying student assessment experiences related to work-placements phenomenologically. It first presents current educational debates on student assessment and work-placements, in the frame of higher education, and particularly in the educational fields of the health professions, and then continues with the clarification of the research aims and motives, and the formation of the research questions. Chapter three then deals with the questions of the legitimacy and justification of the applied phenomenological methodology. It explicates the idea of phenomenology and understanding of phenomenology as a philosophy and a science, the principles of the phenomenological, philosophical and empirical methods, and the concrete steps required when making empirical analysis within the descriptive phenomenological stance.

Chapter four consists of the specific empirical phenomenological process of uncovering the structures of the lived-through student assessment experiences under investigation as experiential phenomena, from an educational perspective. After describing the way in which the descriptive method was applied to the interview data, the results of the phenomenological analysis as one unifying structure and the essential key constituents of the phenomenon, are then presented in chapter five. The sixth chapter discusses in more detail the educational implications of the individual variations within the eidetic structure, and what they mean at a more general level of scientific discourse, but not going beyond the evidence of the data.

The seventh chapter includes a conclusion of the main findings. The eighth and final chapter in this report, contains some theoretical considerations and critical reflections on this study as a whole; namely the phenomenological and scientific character of the study, the validity and reliability of the study in a phenomenological sense, and the position of the study.

2 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION FOR THIS STUDY

While a wide range of research approaches have been used in exploring student assessment in higher educational contexts at various times, in this study, a phenomenological approach will be applied to student assessment in relation to workplace settings. Phenomenology as a philosophy, seeks to understand anything at all that can be experienced through consciousness from the perspective of the experiencing 'subject'. Hence, phenomenology as a research methodology necessitates putting aside all presuppositions, and directing unprejudiced attention to what is presently given, precisely as a phenomenal "given" for the experiencer. A phenomenological approach to student assessment related to work-placements thus invites us to question all the "taken-for-granted" assumptions and previous understandings about whatever is presently given in those specific settings, including all existing theories and scientific knowledge, and previous experiences of the phenomenon being experienced.

However, prior to giving a broader insight into the aim and goals of the study, the main terminology used in the remainder of the thesis will first be clarified. Then, in order to outline the specific interest and motivation for this study, 'for the return to the fundament', and the use of the phenomenological descriptive stance as the methodological foundation, contemporary themes and debates connected to assessment and work-placements in the cross-disciplinary research field of higher education are briefly reviewed.

2.1 SENSE OF THE TERMINOLOGY IN THIS STUDY

The sense of the terminology used in higher educational literature and the different fields of educational research varies. Broadly speaking, one could say that there are many different languages and logics of educational research, as well as theories and conceptions of education and pedagogy. Historically, education as a field of study among other disciplines which developed in the 19th and 20th centuries, largely adopted the conceptions and criteria of the mainstream (natural) sciences that dominated during those times. As a result, the dominance of the language and logic of positivist empirical research is still largely present in contemporary educational

theory and practice (see Soltis, 1985; Ewell, 1991; Labaree, 1998). However, in the contemporary era, the adequacy of the natural science model is becoming more and more challenged in human and social sciences, alongside the developments of the alternative and qualitative research approaches (see Kvale, 1983, 1996; Denzin, 1994; A. Giorgi, 2009), from which the increasing prominence of the explicitly interpretive approach in education is one example (see Shulman, 1986; Labree, 1998). While other global shifts and changes, all over the world, are related to people's conceptions of themselves and the world, as well as the general terminology in use, there is variation in the use of terminology linked with the differences between the educational systems of different countries.

Generally speaking, with the term *higher education*, one often refers to post-secondary education, and qualification at tertiary level. That is, a university level education offering a number of qualifications at undergraduate (such as bachelor's degrees) and postgraduate levels (such as master's degrees and doctorates). In that sense, higher education may also refer to *further education*, for example, when doing the doctor's degree after the master's degree, the master's degree after the bachelor's degree or the bachelor's degree after a secondary level diploma. However, in some contexts, the notion of further education may also refer to post-compulsory or continuing education, which may be at any level after compulsory education (for example, after the age of sixteen), but usually excluding universities. Since the latest reform in 2010, in the higher educational system in Finland, there are now 16 publicly funded universities and 25 publicly funded universities of applied sciences - also called polytechnics (see Ahola & Hoffman, 2012). The research participants of this study are bachelor level students at two Finnish universities of applied sciences.

The notion of *higher education*, and how it is used, in this study, follows the terminology used in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), after the Bologna process. The process began as the Bologna declaration (1999), signed by ministers of education from 29 European countries, aiming to harmonize the academic degree and quality assurance standards of all higher educational institutions (universities, university colleges or universities of applied sciences), throughout Europe. One of the process objectives was the adoption of the basic framework of the three levels to higher education, namely the bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees, which would take 3, 2, and 3 years to complete, respectively.

The aim of the harmonizing endeavor is the implementation of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), which comprises two parts: a system with credits to describe the duration of the program, and a 7-step grading system to indicate the performance of the students (European Commission, 2012). Accordingly, the notion of *higher educational research*, in this study, broadly speaking, refers to cross-disciplinary research fields explicitly concerned with the scientific exploration of all aspects of higher education. These include issues of policy, organization and management, and different approaches to curriculum, and to learning, teaching, and assessment, within the contexts of the so-called tertiary level educational systems and institutions (universities, university colleges, and universities of applied sciences), and the fields of higher educational research of different professions.

The notion of *work-placement*, in the sense used in this study, refers to a fixed period of education within an authentic workplace (or professional practice) context as an integral part of the higher educational process and undergraduate course curriculum. In the Finnish higher educational system, the periods of work-placements³ as implemented in the undergraduate courses of health professionals, are generally grounded in established co-operation and contracts between the higher educational and certain other (public, private, or community sector) work life organizations. In that sense, the term work-placement refers to a period of education outside the higher educational institution, but could be on-campus as well, for example, within a campus clinic. A work-placement thus engages at least three parties in the higher educational process (including assessment), namely the student, the teacher,^{4, 5} and the workplace supervisor,^{6, 7} based on the arrangements between the three parties, and the contracts mentioned above. In this study, both teachers and workplace supervisors, in a more general sense, are also spoken of as educators or instructors.

It is noteworthy that *work-based learning* (WBL) is a commonly used term in the field, also when referring to the pedagogies within university degree

³ In the literature, also called as periods of supervised practice, practice placements, or practical training (e.g. Lähteenmäki, 2005, 2006).

⁴ In the literature, teachers are also named as visiting tutors (e.g. Clouder & Toms, 2008).

⁵ In this study, the teachers are all physiotherapy lecturers and also have a background as accredited physiotherapists.

⁶ In this study, the workplace supervisors were mainly physiotherapists, but sometimes other health professionals (nurses or nurse assistants) and, in one case, early childhood professionals.

⁷ In the literature, also named as mentors (e.g. Wilson, 2014) or preceptors (e.g. Liu, Lei, Mingxia & Haobin, 2010).

programs. However, in the literature, WBL more specifically refers to programs that may be accredited by a higher educational institution, but are designed in co-operation with workplaces to meet the needs of the workplace as well as the learning individual and/or staff (see Gibbs, 2009; Siebert & Costley, 2013). Furthermore, a term *work-related learning* appears in the literature, referring to a variety of learning activities within the higher educational framework, which can occur both within a higher educational institution and a workplace environment (see Virolainen & Stenström, 2013). Similarly, the term *work-integrated learning* is in use when referring to integration of classroom and workplace learning (see Cooper et al., 2010; Trede, 2012). Yet another term is *clinical placement*⁸ which is being used in relation to educational contexts of health professionals and their professional practices, where the ‘clinicians’ (see Bradbury-Jones, Sambrook & Irvine, 2011) or ‘practitioners’ (see Jonsén, Melender & Hilli, 2013) are working with patients. Also a more generic term *practice-based* education is present in the literature, related to discussions of learning and instruction in professional practice settings; that is, authentic workplaces (see Mullholland et al., 2005; Cross et al., 2006; Cluder & Toms, 2008; Morris & Stew, 2013).

In this study, although the work-placement experiences under investigation are linked with physiotherapy education, not all of the work-placements were in ‘clinical settings’, or within the supervision of physiotherapy professionals. For example, one of the participants of this study completed her work-placement in a kindergarten setting, and was supervised (and assessed) by early-childhood professionals at the workplace. Hence, the choice of term, in this study, was *work-placement*⁹ because of its more general sense, referring to a fixed period of education within any type of workplace setting. It is also in accordance with the spirit of the methodological background of this study to try to avoid the use of terminology with connotations which are too specific or limiting.

The notion of *work-placement assessment*, then, in the sense it is being used in this study, refers to *student assessment* related to a fixed period of education within a *workplace* (that is, professional practice) *setting*, as an integral part of the higher educational process and undergraduate course curricula. In that sense, as noted above, student assessment related to a work-placement engages at least three

⁸ In the literature, also referred to as clinical education (e.g. Moore, Morris, Crouch & Martin, 2003).

⁹ In the literature, in a similar sense, also referred to as fieldwork placements (e.g. Ferns & Moore, 2012).

parties¹⁰ (the student, the teacher, and the workplace supervisor) in the work-placement assessment process. In the literature, student assessment in any higher educational setting is commonly held to contribute to two functions: certification and enhancement of student learning (see Boud & Falchikov, 2005). Generally speaking, the notion of *assessment*, however, may refer to a whole range of activities, such as setting goals and assignments, formulating assessment criteria and/or grade symbols and/or descriptors, applying tools and methods of assessment, making judgments, marking or grading, receiving and providing feedback, and moderating or agreeing marks or grades.

Having navigated the educational literature, it is notable that the use of terminology around assessment is diverse, and also somewhat confused, and there is no generally agreed definition of assessment in the field (see Evans, 2013). For some, assessment is seen as an ‘instrument’ for measuring outcomes (Pearson, 2005), and for others it is a ‘process’ of continuous feedback (Shepard, 2008). The term assessment is also used in parallel with *feedback* (see Evans, 2013; Li & De Luca, 2014), and as a synonym for *evaluation* (see Sadler, 2005). In addition, *assessment feedback* is used as an ‘umbrella concept’ to “capture the diversity of definitions,” and to “include the varied roles, types, foci, meanings, and functions, along with the conceptual frameworks underpinning the principles of assessment and feedback,” as well as “all feedback exchanges generated within an assessment design” (Evans, 2013). Furthermore, there is not just one theory of assessment in education. Instead, one may find a number of theories and conceptions that underpin the notions of assessment, also in relation to work-placements or professional practice (see Ferns & Moore, 2012).

Hence, the understanding of assessment in relation to work-placements or professional practice, in the literature, may refer to a variety of paradigms, and to a number of conceptions of the nature and purpose of assessment (see Hager & Butler, 1994; Hargreaves, 1997; Serafini, 2000; Sadler, 2005; Yorke, 2003, 2011; E. Poikela, 2006, 2010, 2012). Some of the commonly referred to conceptions, or dichotomies, in assessment literature, are the evaluative (Hounsell, 1987), educative (Hester, 2011), formative (see Boud & Falchikov, 2006), and summative (see Black & William, 2009) functions of assessment. However, all these concepts are used

¹⁰ In the literature, also named as stakeholders (e.g. Ferns & Moore, 2012).

interchangeably in the field, and the meaning of assessment seems to be a 'work-in-progress' (see Bennett, 2011; Evans, 2013; Li & De Luca, 2014). Yet, the traditional conception of assessment in higher education relates to gathering and reporting individual performance information (Ewell, 1991). In conclusion, there is no generally agreed definition of assessment in the literature, and the notion of assessment may refer to all sorts of comments and grades provided for the student.

In this study, it is essential for the scientific rigor, and its phenomenological justification, that the researcher brackets¹¹ all pre-understandings and theoretical conceptions of the phenomenon of interest, before entering into the empirical research process. This is necessary in the light of the methodological aim of the study; that is, to provide a viewpoint on the direct student assessment experience, without any presuppositions and theoretical lenses. Such an approach implies the adoption of phenomenological attitude and reduction, and the avoidance of any assumptive perspectives and empirical statements with regard to the phenomenon being experienced, in order to be present to it 'freshly'. However, it does not imply that the researcher, while engaging in the process of phenomenological reduction and description, is living in a 'vacuum' or is ignorant of what has been written previously in the field.

Hence, the contemporary themes and debates related to student assessment and work-placements in the cross-disciplinary research field of higher education are briefly reviewed in the following section. Yet, their presence in the literature will be noted without an attempt to build up a comprehensive theoretical framework for the empirical study process. Since it is a suggestion of this study that the descriptive phenomenological approach offers an alternative,¹² systematic and rigorous method for researching the student assessment process, it is the intention of the researcher to highlight the motivation to look for alternative research frameworks in education and assessment.

¹¹ What is meant is that one puts aside or suspends all presuppositions and previous knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation, before entering into the process of phenomenological reduction and analysis (see A. Giorgi, 2009).

¹² When compared to mainstream approaches in the field; that is the traditional scientific ideal based on the natural science paradigm and the interpretive approach.

2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.2.1 Work-placement experience in higher education

The challenges that professional and higher education all over the world are currently facing are well documented in the literature. One of the challenges to higher educational institutions is to provide education and pedagogical environments that are relevant to the demands of the nature and organization of contemporary work, and work environments (see Boud & Garrick, 1999; Boud, Solomon & Symes, 2001; E. Poikela, 2004, 2006; Schmidt & Gibbs, 2009). Another challenge is the demand for more 'effective', 'efficient', and 'evidence-based' practices in education that deliver improved outcomes (see Webster-Wright, 2009; Ahola & Hoffman, 2012), based on 'effective' assessment and quality systems (see E. Poikela & S. Poikela 2006; Boud & Lawson, 2011). Different responds to these demands are noted in the literature, including the world-wide inclusion of work-based learning programs, and work-related education in general (see Boud & Garrick, 1999; Boud, Solomon & Symes, 2001; E. Poikela, 2004, 2006; Gibbs, 2009; Schmidt & Gibbs, 2009; Trede, 2012; Virolainen & Stenström, 2013).

Although a notable part of the work-based learning discourse refers to learning experiences outside the scope of higher education institutions, it is also closely linked in the literature with the work-focused agenda of the vocational and higher education institutions (see Boud, Solomon & Symes, 2001; Hager & Smith, 2004; Boud & Falchikov, 2005, 2006; Yorke, 2011; E. Poikela, 2010, 2012). A point addressed by several authors is that much of the lifelong learning process occurs in workplaces and work-engaged learning settings (see Barnett, 1999; Boud & Garrick, 1999; Boud, Solomon & Symes, 2001; E. Poikela, 2004, 2006; Boud & Falchikov, 2005, 2006; Dall'Alba, 2009; Trede, 2012; Thistlethwaite, 2013). Besides being acknowledged as sites of lifelong learning opportunities, workplaces are appraised as potential sources for making learning and the curriculum more relevant (see Boud & Falchikov, 2005, 2006; Boud & Solomon, 2003; Dall'Alba, 2009; Webster-Wright, 2009; Trede, 2012;

E. Poikela, 2012), facilitating professional learning (see Webster-Wright, 2009) and preparing students for professional practice (see Dall’Alba, 2009), as well as enhancing the development of professional identity (see Trede, 2012). Furthermore, it is highlighted that professional development and learning professional ways of being, are closely interwoven with context and work-placement experiences (see Dall’Alba, 2009; Webster-Wright, 2009; Trede, 2012).

In the frame of the higher educational arena of the health professions, the importance of work-related¹³ learning and practice-education is addressed, and work-placements are addressed as a key component of the undergraduate curricula and learning for a profession (see Abrandt Dahlgren & Dahlgren, 2002; Richardson, Higgs & Dahlgren, 2004; Lähteenmäki, 2005, 2006; Ryan & Higgs, 2008; Williams, 2010; Jonsén et al., 2012). There is also a growing body of literature exploring the educational and pedagogical challenges encountered within those contexts by students and educators (see for example, Rickard, 2002; Chesser-Smyth, 2005; Dornan et al. 2005; Shen & Spouse, 2007; Chikotas, 2009; Delany & Bragge, 2009; Ernstzen, Bitzer & Bragge, 2009; Baglin & Rugg, 2010; Bradbury-Jones, 2011; Sambrook & Irvine, 2011; Melincavage, 2011; Dearnley et al., 2013; Jonsén et al., 2012; Del Prato, 2013; Morris & Stew, 2013; Siebert & Costely, 2013; Wilson, 2013), and by workplace supervisors and senior practitioners (for example, Cross, 1999; O’Callaghan & Eamonn, 2003; Cross et al., 2006; Dickson, Walker & Bourgeois, 2006; Morris & Stew, 2013; Wilson, 2014).

2.2.2 Student assessment experiences in higher education

The literature on student assessment in higher education is twofold. On one hand the potentiality of assessment is addressed, and on the other hand it is suggested that assessment practices may not fit well enough with the needs of the students, the assumed pedagogical rationale, or the expected educational outcomes (see Ramsden, 1992; Biggs, 1996, 1999, 2003; Boud, 1990, 1995, 2000; Boud & Solomon, 2003; Rust, Price & O’Donovan, 2003; E. Poikela, 2004; E. Poikela & S. Poikela, 2005; Sadler, 2005; Clouder & Toms, 2008; Asghar, 2012). A notable part of

¹³ Including learning in virtual and simulation environments (see E. Poikela & S. Poikela, 2012).

the literature suggests that the student assessment practices may not be relevant to the demands of the era, or equip the students well enough for facing the challenges of contemporary workplaces, or meet the need for continuous development (see Boud, 2000, 2007; E. Poikela, 2004; E. Poikela & S. Poikela, 2005; Boud & Falchikov, 2005, 2006; Clouder & Toms, 2008; Yorke, 2003, 2011). Besides, it is argued that assessment discourses and policy in higher educational institutions are largely dominated by a focus on standards and certification, and assessment of learning comes secondary (see Boud & Falchikov, 2005; Boud, 2007). Another argument is that along with the educational outcomes, attention could (and should) be paid more on the educational processes, and the encounters between the different stakeholders involved in those processes (see E. Poikela, 2004; 2012).

A shift in the focus of assessment and the role given to students in the assessment process is cited in the educational literature. It is noted that, traditionally, assessment in higher education has been focused on 'measuring knowledge' rather than 'fostering learning',¹⁴ and the role given to students has been that of 'objects' of measurement rather than that of active 'agents' and 'participants' in their own assessment process. It is suggested by several authors that the emphasis in contemporary era is shifting more towards student centred practices, and the needs of the learners being the key focus for institutional attention (see Hager & Butler, 1994; Serafini, 2000; Boud, 2000, 2007; E. Poikela & S. Poikela, 2005, 2006; Boud & Falchikov, 2005, 2006; Hager, 2005; Haggis, 2006; Nicol, 2007; Bradbury-Jones et al., 2011). However, mixed pictures of assessment practices and conceptions of assessment are noted in the literature (see Ashgar, 2012; Dearnley et al., 2013; Evans, 2013). It is suggested that while reforms and more innovative approaches to student assessment are welcomed by some, they can cause confusion to others (see Dearnley et al. 2013). Furthermore, it is presented that the student assessment experience is becoming an increasingly challenging area in higher education (see Ashgar, 2012; Dearnley et al., 2013).

In the higher educational literature, the pedagogic role of the work-placement experience is highlighted, also when related to health occupations (see Abrandt Dahlgren 2001, 2002, 2003, Lähteenmäki, 2005, 2006; Williams & Beattie,

¹⁴ As noted in the literature, student assessment in higher education is commonly held to contribute to two functions: certification and enhancement of student learning (see Boud & Falchikov, 2005).

2008; Koh, Khoo, Wong & Koh, 2008; Ryan & Higgs, 2008; Ernstzen et al., 2009; S. Poikela et al. 2009; Suzuki & Maruyama, 2010; Williams, 2010; Jonsén et al., 2012). Accordingly, assessment experiences in those settings are addressed, more generally (see Abrandt Dahlgren, 2000, 2001, 2003; Savin-Baden, 2003, 2004; Hmelo-Silver & Barrows, 2008; Dahlgren, Fejes, Abrandt-Dahlgren & Trowald, 2009), and when linked to the educational contexts of physiotherapy, nursing, medicine, and other health related occupations (see Nendaz & Tekian, 1999; Wetherell, Mullins & Hirsch, 1999; Segers & Dochy, 2001; Vendrely, 2002; Morris, 2003; Mullins, Wetherell, Townsend, Winning & Greenwood, 2003; Lähteenmäki, 2005, 2006; Clouder & Toms, 2008; Koh, Khoo, Wong & Koh, 2008; Schimdt, Van der Molen, Te Winkel & Wijnen, 2009; Rochmawati & Wiechula, 2010; Wivnia, Loyens & Derous, 2011). Literature in the health educational arena also more specifically addresses the role of the assessment feedback, and the link between the students' assessment experiences and their perceptions of the 'educational' quality of the work-placement (see Woolley, 1977; Wood, 1982; Cross, 1993; Swanson, Norman & Linn, 1995; Chambers, 1998; Rickard, 2002; Vendrely, 2002; Molloy & Clarke, 2005; Norsini & Burch, 2007; Molloy, 2010; Pelgrin, Kramer, Mekkink & van der Vleuten, 2012; Morris & Stew, 2013).

From the perspective of what has been previously written, in the higher educational arena related to health occupations, Solomon (2005) notes that there is a need for physiotherapy specific, pedagogic research. In addition, Williams and Beattie (2007) from a nurse education perspective and Gunn, Hunter and Haas (2012) from a physiotherapy education perspective, both address a lack of knowledge of student experiences related to work-placements. Furthermore, although there is a body of research on assessment in varying health educational and pedagogical contexts, also from a student perspective (see for example Segers & Dochy, 2001; Savin-Baden, 2004; Gijbels, van de Watering & Dochy, 2005; Ljungman & Silén, 2008), little has been written on student assessment processes in relation to a work-placement as a lived-through experience (see for example Dornan et al., 2005; Chikotas, 2009; Delaney & Bragge, 2009; S. Poikela et al., 2009; Ferns & Moore, 2012), or the meaning of assessment in general (Evans, 2013).

In summary, work-placements and student assessment are both addressed in the literature as the core components of higher educational contexts and undergraduate curricula. However, there is a gap in the knowledge of the

meaning of assessment in higher education, as well as of the assessment processes related to work-placements. Besides, there is a shortage of physiotherapy specific educational research, and studies on student assessment and work-placement experiences in the health educational contexts, in general.

The literature review thus suggests that there is a need for clarifying the meaning of student assessment as lived by participants of the assessment process related to a work-placement. As noted earlier in this study, this implies to the motivation of the researcher to look for alternative research frameworks in education and assessment, in order to understand the assessment process as a lived-through meaningful experience, from the perspective of the experiencer. Within a phenomenological approach to assessment and education as the phenomena of the human lifeworld, the aim is to understand anything at all that can be experienced through consciousness from the perspective of the experiencing 'subject'. In addition, the language used in this study is an attempt to stay away from professional and educational jargon, and to try to describe the experiential (or the lived) level of the phenomenon, from an educational perspective.

2.2.3 Phenomenological studies on assessment

While the term phenomenology does appear in the educational literature, and also in the frame of the higher educational contexts of health occupations (for example, O'Callaghan & Slevin, 2003; Shen & Spouse, 2007; Clouder & Toms, 2008; Chikotas, 2009; Delany & Bragge, 2009; Asghar, 2012; Wilson, 2014), the use of the term is diverse, and not all of the alternatives of phenomenological inquiry that are available are in use. In the above listed references, as examples of the applied phenomenological approaches in the health educational arena, the authors either articulated no philosophical grounding for being phenomenological (O'Callaghan & Slevin, 2003; Shen & Spouse, 2007; Clouder & Toms, 2008; Delany & Bragge, 2009), or justified their methodology based on the interpretive or hermeneutic tradition in phenomenology (Chikotas, 2009; Asghar, 2012; Wilson, 2014). In addition, it is noteworthy that, in the above mentioned articles, there is no reference

that the phenomenological attitude or reduction was adopted, so their claim for being phenomenological in the strongest Husserlian¹⁵ sense of the term is dubious.

Although phenomenological research in the field of physiotherapy education is not abundant (see for example, Clouder & Toms, 2008; Delany & Bragge, 2009; Morris & Graham, 2013; Sedláčková & Ryan, 2013), it can be said that there is an existing phenomenological tradition in the field of nurse education. Discussions, building mainly on a phenomenological hermeneutic or interpretive traditions, have their focus on students' experiences in clinical contexts (see Chesser-Smyth, 2005; Shen & Spouse, 2007; Bradbury-Jones et al. 2011; Melingavage, 2011; Del Prato, 2013) and the nurse educators' (teachers and/or workplace supervisors) experiences of facilitating student learning in those settings (see Dickson, Walker & Bourgeois, 2006; Wilson, 2013), as well as the relationships between students and their clinical educators (see O'Callaghan & Slevin, 2003; Brown, Herd, Humphries & Paton 2005; Dickson et al., 2006; Baglin & Rugg, 2010; Liu, Lei, Mingxi & Haobin, 2010). However, within the existing tradition, there is a lot of variation in the understanding and use of phenomenology as a concept and as a research methodology (see A. Giorgi, 2000a,c; 2005; Norlyk & Harder, 2010). Besides, there is a gap in the research in the phenomenological descriptive approach to educational phenomena.

In summary, a phenomenological approach to phenomena in higher education has been employed for examining students' experiences related to work-placements before, but not from a purely Husserlian perspective, or as a lived-through experience related to a work-placement. It is the assumption of this study that phenomenology offers otherwise overlooked or forgotten possibilities for increasing understanding of educational phenomena, from the perspective of those living and going through the educational processes. Furthermore, it is claimed that a descriptive, Husserlian, phenomenological grounding, in the sense in which it is used in this study, can improve the understanding of a student assessment process related to a work-placement, as an educationally meaningful experience for the student. It is assumed that Husserl's ideas of the phenomenal world and essential relationships offer a solid base for the methodical aims of this study: describing the contents of the concrete experiences of others as lived experiential meanings,

¹⁵ See chapter 4, in this study.

seeking the phenomenal structure of the experiences through determination of the most invariant and eidetic level meanings that belong to that structure, and making the study systematic and rigorous. Finally, the argument in this study is that there is a difference between accounting for a presence that presents itself as 'uncertain', or 'plausible', and one that presents itself as 'precise' and 'fulfilling'.

2.3 THE AIM AND QUESTIONS OF THIS STUDY

In this study, a phenomenological descriptive approach is employed to a lifeworld description, for the examination of the lived-through experiences under examination, and acquiring essential scientific knowledge of the phenomenon of interest. It is the aim of the study to explore the lived-through experiences of student assessment processes related to work-placement, as perceived by undergraduate students, by means of the scientific phenomenological method following the logic of the Husserlian descriptive mode of phenomenological research. It is the starting point of such an approach that, by engaging in the process of phenomenological reduction towards description, one may uncover previously obscure, scientific and disciplinary understandings or new insights into the phenomenon of interest, from the viewpoint of the person living and going through that experience. As such, the study is also an attempt to account for an essential structural description in producing scientific, descriptive phenomenological knowledge about the research phenomenon, from an educational perspective.

The aim of the study leads to the formation of the following general question: how can one obtain stable, phenomenological and scientific knowledge, of the meaning of an aspect of the experiential world of others, when regarding an empirical phenomenon in a limited situation from an educational perspective? The methodological interest then is how these lived experiential meanings of others can be accessed and described phenomenologically without compromising the scientific rigour? The general aim from the phenomenological and educational research perspective is thus to grasp the essence (as a structure) of the lived-through assessment experiences precisely as experienced.

Hence, it is the task of the researcher, by obtaining and analyzing concrete expressions of the assessment events, to access and to describe the essential characteristics of the phenomenon of interest precisely as present in the concrete expressions for the consciousness of the researcher. That is why both reaching the phenomenon of interest in this study, and its systematic and rigorous research process, based on a legitimate and theoretically justified research procedure, form the methodological and theoretical foundation of this study. However, the 'rigour' of this research process is also tied to the possibility of inter-subjective communication and 'transmission' of both the research results and the methods used to arrive at them, and the criteria used to evaluate them.

The research interests and motives in this study are interconnected with the interests of the researcher, both as an educationalist and as a phenomenological empirical researcher. The preliminary research interest is thus, how is assessment experienced as educationally meaningful by undergraduate students in relation to work-placements? That is to say, how is work-placement assessment meaningful to students from an educational perspective? The second interest is what implications can be drawn based on the results of the phenomenological investigation of the student assessment experiences? This means that, at the end of the study, the more general level implications of the results need to be considered by the researcher, while keeping in mind the criterion of not going beyond the phenomenological evidence, since the descriptive scientist can only present and argue for what is evidentially given. In addition, at the end of the research process, and while writing this report, the researcher needs to consider, and critically evaluate, whether this study forms a coherent totality as an attempt to account for an essential structural description in producing scientific phenomenological knowledge about the research phenomenon; that is, in bringing into light student assessment as a lived-through presence for the experiencer. Since it is the aim of this study to examine in a phenomenological way how undergraduate students live through some educational experiences, namely experiences of student assessment related to a work-placement, and to try to determine in what way they are meaningful to them, from an educational perspective, the research questions are formed as follows.

The main research question motivating the study is: *How is the work-placement assessment process present to undergraduate students as a lived-through meaningful experience, from an educational perspective?* As such, the main

research question consists of two intertwined sub-questions: *how is assessment related to a work-placement lived and intended as experiential meanings by the student participants of this study, and what kind of essential structure for the lived-through phenomenon can be described from an educational perspective?*

3 THE METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK IN THIS STUDY

The methodological aim of the study is to contribute to the use of the descriptive mode of phenomenological research, for understanding and describing an empirical phenomenon from an educational perspective. Hence, priority is given to the concrete student assessment experiences. The research interest and understanding of the research phenomenon in this study, and how it can be studied, is based on reading and comprehension of the descriptive phenomenological method, developed and modified by an American scholar, Amedeo Giorgi (1985, 1992, 1997, 2009), and his phenomenological thinking, drawing from the philosophical underpinnings of the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl (1970, 1983). As such, it is the aim of this study to explore assessment related to a work-placement as a lived-through experience, and a presence (that is, lived and intended as meanings) for the undergraduate student. The methodological question then is: how can these concrete experiences and lived experiential meanings under investigation be 'accessed' and 'described' phenomenologically, from an educational perspective?

According to Giorgi (2009), to undertake proper phenomenological research requires a sound understanding of phenomenological philosophy as well as scientific research practices. He also wants to point out that the phenomenological method may often be misunderstood, particularly when judged by non-phenomenological criteria, or misused, when philosophical phenomenology is uncritically used as the model for scientific research (A. Giorgi, 2010). That is why the philosophical underpinnings of Husserl's phenomenology and his method will be discussed first, before going into the details of Giorgi's modification of the method, its justification as an approach to human science, and its application in this study. Since phenomenology is also a movement of multiple perspectives and even contrary emphases (see Spiegelberg, 1975, 1994; Mohanty, 1985, 1989), the sense of the Husserlian (transcendental) perspective and its basic tenets are first clarified, followed by a discussion of the similarities and differences between the descriptive and interpretive traditions in phenomenology, as well as a clarification of the applied phenomenological approach to the phenomenon of interest of this study.

3.1 HUSSERL'S PHENOMENOLOGICAL PHILOSOPHY

Although the Phenomenological Movement is more than Husserl's phenomenology, and not all of Husserl's own philosophy is phenomenology, he has been named as the founder of the Movement (Spiegelberg, 1994). Despite having published his *Logical Investigations* in 1900, it was later in *Ideas I* that Husserl made his phenomenological method explicit. Subsequently, Husserl constantly revised his own texts, and thus left a huge amount of unpublished and published material for his students and followers to work on (A. Giorgi, 2009, 4). Since then, there has been much debate in the literature about the different interpretations of Husserl's work. According to one interpretation, the development of Husserl's thought can be characterized as a transition from descriptive phenomenology to transcendental idealism (see Lauer, 1965). Lauer (1965), the translator of Husserl's *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, however, suggests that the transition also can be seen as a continuum of making explicit what was implicitly present in Husserl's earlier work; namely his desire that philosophy should become a strict science. For Husserl, 'phenomenology as a rigorous science' means a movement away from the objective world, the world which contains the objects that are experienced, into the subjective world of consciousness, the world which contains these objects as 'phenomena' intended by consciousness (Dennis, 1974, 142-143).

Husserl's phenomenological philosophy does not deny the actual existence of the 'real' world, but seeks instead to clarify the sense of this world which everybody accepts as actually existing. In his philosophical method and the transcendental perspective that he speaks about, Husserl (1983) does not posit a real, existing subjectivity as the source of its acts. Therefore, transcendental consciousness is not a human mode of consciousness. It is a universal form of pure essential consciousness that would belong to every type of being that participated in conscious reality (A. Giorgi & B. Giorgi, 2008, 171). Accordingly, to assume a transcendental phenomenological perspective, would mean to view the objects of consciousness from the perspective of a pure, flowing, essential consciousness. Husserl also claimed that the mode of transcendental consciousness can be actually experienced with the proper attitude, that is, as a consequence of the application of a severe criterion of ultimacy and universality (A. Giorgi, 2009, 88).

As noted by Spiegelberg (1994, 69-165), Husserl's phenomenological philosophy began as a critique of psychologism and naturalism. Although Husserl first called his approach a descriptive psychology, he later wanted to separate phenomenological philosophy from psychology. Naturalism as a view that Husserl opposes sees the whole of the world as either 'physical' or 'psychical', hence to be explored merely by the natural sciences (including psychology), and leaving no room for ideal identities such as meanings or laws as such. Husserl argued that the study of consciousness must be very different from the study of nature. Hence, phenomenology, for Husserl, does not proceed through the collection of large amounts of data to a general theory beyond the data itself, as in the scientific method of induction. Rather, it aims to look at particular examples without theoretical presuppositions, before then going on to discern what is essential and necessary to these experiences. Hence, within the Husserlian phenomenological philosophy, one takes the object that s/he considers to be a phenomenon (that is, something that is present to her or his consciousness), but withholds from making the claim that the object really exists in the way that it presents itself (A. Giorgi, 2006b).

The concept of intentionality, in Husserl's phenomenology, as a general theory of the contents of intentional states of consciousness, accounts for the directedness of all mental activity (Dreyfus, 1987, 2), and serves as the basis for understanding how consciousness is viewed in phenomenology. It is because of the intentionality of our consciousness that we are in direct contact with the world. For Husserl (1983, 200), "under intentionality, we understand the own peculiarity of mental processes to be consciousness of something". Hence, consciousness makes objects become "present", or in other words, it actualizes "presences". As stated by Giorgi (2009, 184), (this) "being directed to other than itself on the part of the subjectivity is what intentionality means in phenomenology, although reflectively, subjectivity can make aspects of itself as an object of such directed activity". The intentional relation, for Husserl, is the basis of meaning as ideal beings. As such, it also serves as the grounding for understanding how phenomenological descriptions can be accomplished based on reduction and conscious acts.

In relation to experience, for Husserl, intentionality refers to the fact that a given something is always experienced as something. However, a phenomenological approach to science, in Husserl's view, is more comprehensive

than a traditional empirical perspective, as it allows for 'irreal'¹⁶ objects as well as 'real' ones. According to Giorgi (2009, 67), a 'real' object, for Husserl, is "any object that is in space, time, and is regulated by causality". Therefore, for example, meanings, which are not spatial, would not be considered as real' objects. However, they are experiential in the sense that they can only appear (that is, intuited) in the consciousness of individuals. Hence, in Husserl's phenomenology, experience means the intuition of real objects, restricting the term to the presence of 'one type' of a possible object (that is, a material, empirical object to consciousness) that can be given to consciousness. Intuition, thus, is the broader term and experience the narrower one, because the latter refers to a narrower range of presences, those that carry the index of "reality" with them (A. Giorgi, 1994).

Husserl's phenomenological philosophy also contains a theory of evidence as self-evidence, as well as a distinction between adequate and inadequate self-evidence. For Husserl, meanings, which can be intuited, can be described, and, therefore, serve as 'evidence'. Hence, "evidence as self-evidence", in Husserl's phenomenology, is "being present to meaning with insight" (A. Giorgi, 1987) and having a full and "adequate" intuitive understanding of the meaning (Spiegelberg, 1994). This can be achieved by a special (reflective) act of consciousness Husserl calls phenomenological reduction, in which we turn our attention away from the object being referred to, and away from our experience of being directed toward that object, and then turn our attention to the special (noetic¹⁷) act and to its intentional content (noema¹⁸), thus making our representation of the conditions of satisfaction of the intentional state our object (Dreyfus & Hall, 1987, 6). This act, as explained by Føllesdal (1987), is the turning of the attention away from both objects in the world and mental activity to the mental contents which make possible the reference of 'each type' of mental state to each type of object, and, as such, refers to transcendental phenomenological reduction.

Husserl, however, as pointed out by Giorgi (1992, 2009), speaks about different types of phenomenological attitude and reduction. Firstly, he speaks about phenomenological reduction as a perspective on consciousness, which directs us to step back, and describe and examine the object of interest as a presence, by

¹⁶ For Husserl, it is the property which pure phenomena of transcendental phenomenology have of not being part of a 'real' world (see Spiegelberg, 1994)

¹⁷ Refers to the 'act side' of the Husserl's noetic-noematic (act-object) relation.

¹⁸ Refers to the 'object side' of the Husserl's noetic-noematic (act-object) relation.

withholding any existential claims of it, and by bracketing¹⁹ all past knowledge about the phenomenon encountered, to break from the natural attitude so that experience is grasped in terms of phenomena and acts. Secondly, he speaks about eidetic level reduction, which reduces the objects or givens to their essences by seeking the essential or the most invariant meanings. Thirdly, Husserl speaks about psychological (that is, scientific or empirical level) phenomenological reduction, which frames consciousness and eidetics in terms of living, human subjects, and brackets the world but not the empirical subject. Finally, at the deepest level, Husserl speaks about transcendental phenomenological reduction, which brackets the empirical subject as well as the world, and brings into view the fundamental constitutive levels of subjectivity, such as temporality, embodiment, and so on. To follow Husserl, and to perform phenomenological, philosophical level analyses, would mean the use of the transcendental phenomenological reduction.

Along with Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, there are many appropriations and extensions of phenomenological method in areas beyond philosophy, notably in the human sciences. However, as noted by Giorgi,²⁰ many of these approaches take their cue from existential or hermeneutic (or interpretive) traditions of phenomenology, and the work of other philosophers, rather than Husserl's own writings. When speaking of how researchers make use of the phenomenological approach, for example, within pedagogically orientated contexts, the work of Max van Manen²¹ in translating phenomenology and hermeneutics from the philosophical arena into the context of educational research is often quoted (see Barnacle, 2004; Bourke, 2007; Saevi & Eilifsen, 2008). His research model and notion of lived experience have provided an influential basis for educational researchers to reflect their own personal experiences, in different areas and roles of educational arena. While debates about the meaning of hermeneutics and phenomenology for educational research still continue, this notion of lived experience and its application to reflective practice has become a feature of much that goes by the name of phenomenology within this area (Dahlberg, Drew & Nyström, 2007).

However, it is the aim of a phenomenological descriptive researcher to 'put aside' and 'bracket' all of the foreknowledge that one has about the phenomenon

¹⁹ Bracketing, in this context, means 'putting aside' or 'suspending' all knowledge and experiences of the phenomenon under examination.

²⁰ See A. Giorgi, 1992, 1994, 2000a, 2000c, 2005, 2006a, 2006b, 2008, 2010, 2011.

²¹ For example, van Manen, 1990, 1991, 1995, 1996, 1997.

of interest, and to be open to the phenomenon as such. It means that the researcher attempts to avoid bringing in any 'non-given' factors (theoretical assumptions or explanations) about the phenomenon under study, while attempting to be present to the 'given' precisely as it presents itself (that is, being present to the given as an immediate given). This freedom from presuppositions, and excluding all empirical interpretations and existential affirmations, Husserl calls epoché. In the epoché the world is "placed out of action", while "remaining bracketed" (Moustakas, 1994, 85). In other words, the natural attitude that is the attitude of our everyday world is put "out of play" (A. Giorgi, 2009, 10). As noted by Giorgi, this does not mean denying the reality of everything, but instead, disengaging oneself from previous (also scientific) knowledge, even though the evidential value of the knowledge would seem perfect. Hence, it is the aim of this study to grasp the phenomenon of interest as actually lived, without theorizing beforehand.

3.1.1. The world of science as a derivation of the human lifeworld

The notion of the human lifeworld, which is one of the key terms in Husserl's phenomenology, refers to the common world that we often take for granted (A. Giorgi, 2009, 11). It is the world that all humans initially encounter and from which all other specialized worlds emerge, and even the world of science is a derivation of the lifeworld. Since the lifeworld is always richer and more complex than the adopted research perspective, to understand more completely our specialized worlds, including the world of science, we need to understand how the specialized worlds relate to the lifeworld. Giorgi (2006b) wants the human scientific researcher to be aware that while assuming a phenomenological scientific attitude to human lifeworld phenomena, s/he also needs to adopt a disciplinary attitude in order to "set some limits" and to "thematize" only a particular aspect of a more complex reality. It means that descriptions of the lived experiences of persons in specific settings could just as easily lend themselves to another type of disciplinary analysis, depending upon the interests of the researcher and the adopted perspective toward the concrete lifeworld description.

By adopting an educational and empirical²² research perspective, and thus a special set for the description of the lived-through experience, in this study, the researcher operates within the assumption that educational ‘reality’ is not ready-made in the human lifeworld, but rather that it has to be constituted by the conscious acts of the researcher. Accordingly, to ‘adopt a set’, in this study, means to set some limits on the phenomenological analysis and to thematize only a particular aspect of a more complex reality. This is necessary, because it is not possible to grasp the whole lifeworld of a person, in one study. This understanding is based on Husserl’s (1983) tenets of *intentionality* (referring to human consciousness being directed toward objects or situations in the world), *subjectivity* (referring to human mind and body as the basic source of the intentionality of consciousness), *meanings* (referring to the ideal component to perception that Husserl calls *noema* and the sense of the perceptual act, that Husserl calls *noesis*), and the *intentional relation* as the basis of meaning (referring to the object as meant and intended). In addition, it is assumed that an educational meaning always is a ‘type of meaning’, because it is constituted by the conscious acts of the researcher, while the educational interests dominate. In Husserl’s phenomenology, “constitution” of the phenomenological meaning by the conscious acts of the researcher, is the “bringing about of a manifestation of the phenomenon of interest by phenomenological reduction” (A. Giorgi, 2009, 186). However, it is not the ‘noema’ as an ideal, universal sense that the researcher of this study is seeking (that would be the goal of the transcendental reduction), but indeed the educational meaning.

The phenomenon of interest in this study is initially experienced by the research participants within the context of their lifeworlds as undergraduate students. That is why the ‘first access’ to the phenomenon is through expressions of the concrete situations of living through the work-placement assessment process by the student participants. To understand the phenomenon of interest more completely as an educational and a lifeworld phenomenon, the researcher then has to make explicit the way in which assessment related to a work-placement is lived and intended by the students, from an educational perspective. Hence, the final description of the phenomenon of interest is a ‘second-order description’ by the researcher, based on

²² In a broadened Husserlain sense of the term (see A. Giorgi, 2009, 67-68).

the obtained descriptive data (the concrete experiences expressed by the students), from an educational perspective.

In conclusion, the sense of phenomenology in this study is that it is applied with a disciplinary perspective for an empirical study of a certain lifeworld phenomenon. Hence a phenomenological scientific approach is applied, with an educational perspective for studying students' lived-through experiences in assessment related to work-placements. Thus, the researcher wants to understand student assessment process related to a work-placement, in a more precise and systematic way; as a presence for the experiencer, from the perspective of the chosen disciplinary meaning.

3.1.2 The medium of access to lived experiences

Husserl's phenomenology, as implied above, thematizes the phenomenon of consciousness, which in its most comprehensive sense refers to the totality of lived experiences of a single person (A. Giorgi, 1992). As such, consciousness refers to the awareness of the whole 'embodied-self-world-others' system, all of which and parts of which are intuitable and thus presentable to the conscious person (A. Giorgi, 2009). Hence, for Husserl, nothing can be known, spoken about, or referred to without implicitly including consciousness, not even scientific knowledge. Husserl's phenomenology thus seeks to understand anything at all that can be experienced through the consciousness, including both 'real' and 'irreal' objects, from the perspective of the conscious person undergoing that experience. Husserl also presented a method whereby the phenomenological researcher can access how those 'givens' as 'phenomena' appear as a 'presence' to consciousness.

As stated by Dennis (1974), 'phenomena' are the only data directly present to consciousness and they are the only data that are investigated by phenomenology. Hence, without the consciousness of an individual person, with the necessary intentionality implied therein, there could be no phenomenon at all. This means that the phenomenon, although it appears in an act of consciousness, has also been intended by the very consciousness in which it appears. Thus, as pointed out by Giorgi (2009), there is an intentional structure within the consciousness which has the 'phenomenon' as its object. By an analysis of this structure based on

conscious acts the phenomenologist then claims to be able to discover the phenomenon exactly as present to the consciousness of the experience. Giorgi (1987) also wants to emphasize that even though various techniques are being used by the researcher to study this intentional structure in order to grasp the essence of the phenomenon, this does not add anything to the structure.

For Husserl, a more secure founding of scientific knowledge thus would start with consciousness. However, the phenomenological method he articulated, was intended to be a philosophical one. That is why Giorgi (see A. Giorgi, 1985, 1997, 2009), whose work draws upon the intersection of phenomenological philosophy and human science²³, wanted to modify Husserl's method to make it more appropriate for scientific purposes; so that applying the method to descriptive data would result in scientific analysis based upon the criteria of phenomenology and the logic of research. For Giorgi (1987, 1992, 1994, 2002), empiricism is not the best philosophy for grounding the human science, and he argues that a phenomenological theory of science permits a more adequate development of human science. In addition, Giorgi (2000b, 2002, 2008, 2009) argues that his version of the descriptive phenomenological method is consistent with the Husserlian framework and follows its foundations; its concerns about epistemology, and the types of science required to establish sound knowledge. Giorgi (2009, 4-5) states that if science, in general, is concerned about knowledge, phenomenology is concerned with how any "given" whatsoever, including knowledge, is related to consciousness. Thus, from a phenomenological perspective to science, it is more rigorous to acknowledge the role of consciousness as contributing to the very meaning of the experienced object than it is to ignore it.

In the above context, phenomenology is considered to be the study of the structures of human phenomena precisely as they appear to consciousness. These structures include both the 'given' aspect (*noema* in Husserl's terms) that is present to consciousness, and the acts of consciousness (*noematic* to Husserl) to which the 'given' is present. In that approach, according to Giorgi (2009, 9-10), the object being experienced as a 'given' is considered precisely as something present to the experiencer. It is thus a 'phenomenon' for the experiencer but not necessarily a 'reality' in the world. Consequently, all epistemological claims made by the

²³ As an approach to human phenomena as opposed to the phenomena of the nature (see A. Giorgi, 2009, 70).

researcher relate to the experiential realm of the experience and not the reality aspect of the 'given'. Hence, the sense of phenomenon in phenomenology, and thus in this study, is that one must be present to the 'given' precisely as it presents itself, but one refrains from stating that the 'given' also exists in the way it is presented to the consciousness of the experiencer. This caution is exercised because in ordinary life people often take the things and objects of perception for granted, as 'existing'. Thus, for Husserl, it is important that we try first to see how the object presents itself, without claiming its existence. As stated by Giorgi (2009, 107), this kind of thinking guides us back from theoretical abstractions to the reality of lived experiences.

3.2 PHENOMENOLOGICAL STANCE TO STUDYING HUMAN PHENOMENA

As implied above, in this study, the phenomenon of interest and how it can be studied are grounded in the phenomenological descriptive method developed by Giorgi and based on the tenets of Husserl's phenomenological philosophy. The fundamental methodological assumption is that applied phenomenology, in the sense in which it is used in this study, offers a legitimate method for the examination of empirical phenomena, from an educational perspective. It is also assumed that the phenomenologically grounded descriptive science can and should be judged by its own internal criteria, and not by the criteria of other philosophical systems, for example, philosophical empiricism or hermeneutics.

As noted by Giorgi (1985, 1992, 1997, 2009), phenomenology pries open the often unquestioned presuppositions in science by guiding us back from theoretical abstractions to the reality of lived experiences. By doing so, it offers possibilities for increasing scientific knowledge by confronting the predominance of theory and mainstream science. Within the phenomenological philosophy of science, the nature of human phenomena and experiences are examined by taking into account the contexts and subjective meanings given to particular situations. However, at the end of the research process, the phenomenological researcher, like any other, although not engaging in the process as a representative of any predetermined theory approach, may choose to debate (in the light of his/her own research findings) with certain theoretical perspectives, since it is the general aim within the process of generating scientific knowledge (see A. Giorgi, 1992).

Accordingly, although the point of departure of this study is to challenge the often taken-for-granted scientific presuppositions, the aim is not to ignore the previous research that has been practiced from varying perspectives.

As noted by Giorgi (1997), phenomenology as a science is concerned with the phenomena that are 'given' to the experiencing individuals, and all of the 'givens' must be understood in their given modalities (for example, as perceived, memorized, imagined) as phenomena; that is, not as 'real existents'. According to Giorgi (2009), this distinction, made by Husserl, is particularly important because many of the phenomena of human sciences are 'presences' that may not have 'realistic' references (those of temporality, spatiality, and causality) and yet are vital for proper understanding of human phenomena. For example, ideas, memories, and meanings, are all given to us in time but not in space, and for phenomenologists they are not causally related, and thus would not be considered as 'real' objects; but they are all 'experiential' in the sense that they can only appear in the consciousness of individuals. This means that 'real' objects can exist independently of consciousness, but experiential phenomena cannot (A. Giorgi, 2009, 67-68). Even when 'real' objects are the reference points, the human sciences within a phenomenological stance concentrate on how such objects are perceived or what they mean, viewing the phenomenon of interest exactly as a 'phenomenon'; that is, as a 'presence' of any given whatsoever, precisely as given to the consciousness of the experiencer. As stated by Giorgi (2009, 69), "it is the experienced 'as experienced' that interests phenomenology, and this includes the horizon of possibilities that surrounds the given". It is also the position adopted in this study.

However, the phenomenological method as developed and modified by Giorgi, and as it has been applied in this study, is not the only methodological approach for studying human phenomena phenomenologically. Moreover, when exploring phenomenological research and literature, it quickly becomes evident that the term *phenomenology* holds rather different meanings depending on the context of its usage, be it theoretical or practical, philosophical or scientific. Besides being characterized, in the widest sense of the term, as a philosophical movement (Spiegelberg, 1994), phenomenology has been used as a structured framework and/or a methodological approach to human science research for different purposes, under different circumstances (see A. Giorgi, 1985, 1997, 2009; van Manen, 1990, 1997; Perttula, 1995, 1998, 2000, 2009; Dowling, 2007), and is sometimes

accompanied by confusion and misunderstanding of the purpose and use of the various schools of phenomenological thought (see A. Giorgi, 2000a, 2000b, 2005a, 2005b, 2008; Applebaum, 2011).

3.2.1 Various applications of the phenomenological method

Phenomenology as a modern movement in philosophy is generally acknowledged in contemporary research. Nevertheless, there is also a notable agreement among phenomenological scholars and research literature, that it is not possible to give a univocal definition of phenomenology that would be comprehensive enough to include its varied interpretations (see Spiegelberg, 1994; Cloonan, 1995; A. Giorgi, 2009; Applebaum, 2011). On the other hand, it has been claimed that there are, or at least should be, certain essentials that constitute a common core shared by all phenomenologists, particularly when phenomenology is considered as a research approach to the human sciences (see Churchill, 2008; Norlyk & Harder, 2010). For Spiegelberg (1994, 679), the most characteristic core of phenomenological philosophy is its method. According to Giorgi (2010, 19), however, to undertake proper phenomenological research requires a sound understanding of phenomenological philosophy as well as of scientific research practices. Giorgi's (2000a, 2000b, 2005, 2006a, 2006b) claim, then, is that the phenomenological method may often be misused, when philosophical phenomenology is uncritically used as the model for scientific research.

As noted by Spiegelberg (1994, 679), as a result of its varied philosophical interpretations, there are a number of schools of phenomenology, and although they have some commonalities, they also have distinct features such as different purposes and different approaches to data analysis. Giorgi and Giorgi (2008a) state that the variation is notable when phenomenology is applied as a research methodology to human or social sciences, such as psychology, education, and health sciences. While defining their own methodological approach as a version of 'descriptive pre-transcendental Husserlian phenomenology', Giorgi and Giorgi identified five general types of phenomenological method used in psychology in the first decade of the 21st century. The other four approaches were 'Goethan pre-philosophical experimental phenomenology', 'Grass-root phenomenology',

‘Interpretive phenomenology’, and ‘Husserlian transcendental phenomenology’. Marc Applebaum (2011) notes that from his viewpoint there are several differences between the descriptive and interpretive approaches of phenomenology in the conceptions of perception, understanding and method. He states that, whereas Giorgi’s descriptive phenomenological method is shaped by Husserl’s (1859-1938) phenomenological philosophy, advocates of interpretive approaches, often named as ‘hermeneutic’ or ‘interpretive phenomenology,’ more often tend to reference the philosophical hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976).

As noted by Giorgi (1992, 237), Husserl invented phenomenological reduction as a methodological device to help make research findings more precise, but, paradoxically, there seems to be great confusion about the reduction itself, and how it should be used. According to Dreyfus and Hall (1987), even Husserl himself complained that none of his former students fully understood the idea of the transcendental phenomenological reduction, and the special realm of entities revealed by the reduction. It has been suggested by Giorgi and Giorgi (2003) that the confusion could be explained partly because Husserl not only described several reductions but also kept clarifying them, and in part because many critical commentators of Husserl’s phenomenology believed that the correct implementation of the transcendental reduction was not possible. However, as stated by Dreyfus and Hall (1987, 1), (although) “the reduction has been performed and pronounced unperformable, and existence has been bracketed and declared unbracketable, by an army of Husserl exegetes, all [have been presented] without a clear explanation in non-Husserlian terms of what reduction is, what it reveals, and why according to Husserl one must perform it in order to do philosophy”.

For Giorgi (see A. Giorgi, 1985, 1997, 2009), the sense of phenomenology that he employs is consistent with the basic tenets of Husserl’s phenomenological philosophy even as it moves toward scientific phenomenological understandings and practices. Accordingly, “to make phenomenological claims in the strongest sense one would have to use some version of the phenomenological method, along with certain other key procedures” (A. Giorgi & B. Giorgi, 2003, 245). Giorgi (2009, 67) also wants to point out that the phenomenological approach (to philosophy and science) is not against the empirical perspective, and nor is it anti-quantitative. Therefore, if one asks a quantitative question, one should use a

quantitative method, and if one asks a qualitative question, then one should use a qualitative method (A. Giorgi, 2009, 5). According to Giorgi (1994), phenomenology is often associated with qualitative research practices because it is a philosophy that offers certain logic for legitimating qualitative discriminations with rigour, and in terms of theoretical and methodical consistency. This forms the basis for his arguments for a phenomenological approach to qualitative research, and descriptive logic for scientific knowledge in the human sciences, rather than an interpretive or hermeneutic approach (A. Giorgi, 1992).

Giorgi and Giorgi (2008b) also criticize Canadian scholar Max van Manen, who is often named as influential among educational phenomenologists, for trying to integrate the contributions of Husserl, Heidegger, and Gadamer into his research praxis, although the differences between the three philosophers “are too great to overcome”. They criticize van Manen for assuming that “if a meaning has been grasped, then an act of interpretation has taken place,” and state that “it’s not Husserl’s position”. They also criticize his assertion that “if a lived experience has to be captured in language then it inevitably has to be interpreted,” and state that “it is not Husserl’s theory of description”. Giorgi (1997, 238) points out that interpretation is not description because, in the interpretive approach, the accounting of the ‘given’ requires the assumption of a determined perspective to the given, and finding an appropriate angle from which to undertake the analysis, either from theory or for pragmatic reasons; this is not necessarily demanded by the intuitive evidence. Also, Spiegelberg (1994) clarifies the use of phenomenological intuiting based on Husserl as an act in which a phenomenon is contemplated and explored directly, and phenomenological reduction as the intuitive study of essences, in which special attention is paid to the essential ways in which all objects that appear to consciousness are constituted in and by consciousness. Thus, he, too, notes the search for (unifying) essences as the intuitive study based on evidence, as central features in Husserl’s descriptive phenomenology.

Giorgi (see A. Giorgi, 1992) clearly states his position by claiming that both description and interpretation can be seen as legitimate attitudes tied to different conditions and interests, and ultimately description and interpretation cannot eliminate each other. It is also the position taken in this study. According to Giorgi and Giorgi (2008), the two methods of description and interpretation cannot be collapsed into one. Their argumentation: 1.) refers to the difference between

Husserl's epistemological and Heidegger's ontological level perspectives, and which is primary; 2.) says that Martin Heidegger (1962), who reinterpreted the phenomenological project and advocated an interpretive methodology, employed a different type of phenomenological reduction which converged with the hermeneutic tradition, as it thematized *being* (Dasein for Heidegger) rather than *consciousness*; 3.) and says that by doing so, Heidegger, who was Husserl's former student, deviated from Husserl's line of thinking, particularly his transcendental consciousness perspective; and 4.) that is why scholars following Heidegger's phenomenological reduction would be conducting an ontological investigation.

Several other scholars have also partaken in the philosophical debates around description and interpretation within phenomenology. For example, Applebaum (2011), too, notes that whereas the descriptive psychological research method delineated by Giorgi (2009) is shaped by the phenomenological philosophical method of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), the advocates of interpretive approaches (also named as hermeneutic or interpretive phenomenology) frequently reference the philosophical hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976). Applebaum then argues against oversimplifying the differences between descriptive and interpretive phenomenological research approaches, claiming that the two approaches constitute the research situation in profoundly different ways. Mohanty (1984), however, states that from a philosophical perspective the two approaches (hermeneutics and phenomenology) do not necessarily represent an intrinsic antagonism between description and interpretation. Churchill (2008), whilst referring to previous publications by Applebaum (2007), Giorgi (2006), and Cloonan (1995), agrees with the need to differentiate Giorgi's more strictly descriptive method from those whose own applications of phenomenology differ from a descriptive understanding of principles derived from Husserl. He also points out that the same could be said for the research based on the writings of Paul Colaizzi (1978), who integrated existential-hermeneutic principles derived from Heidegger into his own phenomenological approach. Churchill then states that his own aim is the demonstration of the shared foundation and methodological interests (for example reliability, verification, and external validity) of the different phenomenological traditions, rather than emphasizing their differences. For him, it would represent "the better way to serve the movement of phenomenologically oriented human science research, as a whole".

Dahlberg, Drew, and Nyström (2007) present somewhat similar thoughts by aiming for an “exegesis” of phenomenology in human sciences scholarship, based on a reflective life-world²⁴ research model and the integration of interpretive methodologies and phenomenological epistemology. These thoughts are presented through an exploration of the similarities and differences between the transcendental phenomenology of Edmund Husserl and the hermeneutic phenomenology of Martin Heidegger. Human science disciplines such as nursing, medicine, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, education, counselling, psychotherapy, and social work, for the authors, represent disciplines that acknowledge and build upon the primacy of human intentional experience. The aim of making experience explicit, then, is associated with the aim for description and better understanding of tacit knowledge in caring and teaching.

Phenomenologically inspired research method has also been interpreted and modified by a Finnish scholar, Juha Perttula (see Perttula, 1995, 1998, 2000, 2009), in his descriptively oriented empirical hermeneutic (psychological) method (in Perttula, 1998), combining the ideas of social constructionism and hermeneutics into the existential-phenomenological approach, and drawing from several philosophers. According to Perttula (1998), it is possible to combine the phenomenological attitude with the hermeneutic attitude, since the former when associated to phenomenological reduction, expresses the demand for neutrality and rigour, and the latter, when associated with the hermeneutic circle, “as the subjective pole of the same process within the researcher”, gives primacy to the phenomenon in the way it manifests itself. In Perttula’s (1998) view, the ontological aspect of the methodological foundation clarifies the situatedness of a human as “being-in-the-world,” and the role of the life-world of the researcher within the research process, whilst the descriptive phenomenological aspect clarifies the epistemological aspect of the methodological foundation.

In this thesis, descriptive methodology, instead of interpretive methodology,²⁵ is posited as a primary research perspective in the light of a phenomenological scientific research tradition. This means that interpretation is primarily understood as an approach related to the tradition of hermeneutics and the

²⁴ As written by the authors.

²⁵ Here, the interpretive stance is seen as the ‘mainstream’ approach in the contemporary use of phenomenology in education, or, human sciences in general (see A. Giorgi, 1992)

Heideggerian starting point rather than the Husserlian. As such, it is understood as emphasizing and thematizing “*being*” (Dasein in Heidegger’s terminology) rather than “*consciousness*”, and the “*ontological*” rather than “*epistemological*” perspective of the inquiry. It is because of this focus on the question of *being* (Dasein) that Heidegger did not employ the Husserlian phenomenological reduction, and to follow his reduction would mean that the researcher would be conducting an ontological investigation (A. Giorgi & B. Giorgi, 2008a, 167). But this is not the aim of this study. Instead, working within a phenomenological approach aiming at the description of the essence as a general structure of the phenomenon of interest is regarded as the primary research perspective of this study, relating to a Husserlian tradition and applied phenomenological starting point. That is to say that, in this study, phenomenology is regarded as a study of essences but also as a study of meanings; a meaning is the determinate relationship between an act of consciousness and its object which the intentional (the ‘act-object’ or the ‘noetic-noematic’) relationship establishes (see A. Giorgi, 2009, 104-105). Hence, description in this study means articulation of the intentional objects of experience exactly as ‘given’ to the consciousness of the experiencer, neither adding nor subtracting from what is present as a ‘given’.

That said, the obvious similarities between the two approaches are also acknowledged. As noted by Giorgi (1992), both in the interpretative and the descriptive stances in phenomenology, meanings are considered as the established relations between an act of consciousness (“*noesis*”) and its object (“*noema*”), which are present to our consciousness in different moments of the experiential stream, and can aid examination of the qualitative aspects of experiential objects and the phenomena of the human lifeworld. However, it is the difference between accounting for a presence based on “plausibility of meanings” (linked with the interpretive stance) and “precision of meanings” (linked with the descriptive stance) that matters between the two approaches claiming their legitimation based on the phenomenological philosophy of science. Hence, for the interpretivist, meanings are not univocal and interpretations are necessary for going beyond the data; for example, when involving pragmatic or practical concerns, and making the best interpretation possible. The descriptive scientist, however, believes that meanings can be described in their ambiguity, complexity, and multiplicity; so s/he chooses “to

stay with the evidence regardless of how it presents itself". It is the position of the descriptivist that was taken in this study.

As stated by Giorgi (1992), for the descriptive researcher, going beyond the data, or prematurely attempting to clarify what presents itself as ambiguous, is not necessary (or even justifiable), since there is no reason why one cannot describe the data in its ambiguity, incompleteness, or in its contradictory status. The situation, in this study - investigating an under-researched area, not only from the perspective of the specific research question (*in what ways is assessment related to a work-placement educationally meaningful to undergraduate students?*), but also in the light of the intersection of all the areas of higher educational research within which it operates (assessment, problem-based pedagogy, work-engaged learning and teaching, physiotherapy undergraduate programs, and applied phenomenology), and not involving any practical concerns for going beyond the research evidence - was considered suited to the adoption of the descriptive and more foundational stance to the research phenomenon.

Hence, within the phenomenological research perspective, in this study, a position similar to Giorgi's (see A. Giorgi, 1985, 1992, 1997, 2009) is adopted, that to accept the demand to be scientific means that one needs to approach the phenomenon one is interested in investigating in a methodical, systematic, and rigorous way. This general idea of science thus concerns all research practices and phenomena. However, as pointed out by Giorgi (see A. Giorgi, 1985, 1992, 1997, 2009), significant differences have to be introduced to the practice of science when dealing with humans, and the phenomena of the human lifeworld, as objects of consciousness, if compared to things and processes such as the objects of the natural sciences. Within the research perspective of this study, there is also an agreement with Giorgi's (1992) position that description and interpretation are legitimate attitudes, tied to different conditions and interests, defined in terms of the type of evidence, and by motives for staying within or going beyond the evidence.

Since it is the aim of this study to uncover and to understand assessment related to work-placement, as a lived-through experience of the student, and a 'presence to the consciousness of the experiencer, the author adheres in the process of phenomenological reduction to the essential structural description of the research phenomenon. This means primarily staying within the 'evidentiary givenness'. That is to say that whatever becomes apparent from the raw data (the descriptions by

participants of their lived-through experiences) to the consciousness of the researcher is described precisely as it shows itself, as a 'given'. Therefore, whilst description is given epistemological primacy in forming the methodological foundation of this research, the study is guided by a phenomenological philosophy of science as it has been described by Husserl (1983) and not by empirical or hermeneutic philosophy. By referring to Giorgi's (1985, 1997, 2009) scientific phenomenological method based on Husserl, the researcher's aim is for the research analysis to take place from within a phenomenological scientific reduction with a generic educational perspective and a special sensitivity to students' work-placement assessment experiences. She thus applies an educational perspective to a specific lifeworld experience. One could say that she makes "an educational interpretation" of a lifeworld event, and that would be true as well. However, the claim in this study is that she does it by means of a descriptive phenomenological method.

3.2.2 Phenomenological reduction as a methodological device

The meaning of reduction within Husserl's phenomenology is different from the philosophies of naturalism and positivism (Spiegelberg, 1994, 118). Throughout his writings Husserl insisted that phenomenology is a reflective enterprise and phenomenological reduction is a special act of reflection (Schmitt, 1959, 240). As already implied earlier in this chapter, Husserl described several reductions on different levels: firstly, he speaks about the basic phenomenological reduction which breaks from the natural attitude; then he speaks about the phenomenological scientific level reduction, which brackets the world but not the living (empirical) subjectivity; he also speaks about the phenomenological eidetic level reduction which reduces the objects as givens to their essences; finally, at the deepest level, he speaks about the transcendental phenomenological reduction which brackets the empirical subjects as well as the world. According to Giorgi (1997), other reductions than the 'basic phenomenological reduction' described by Husserl, are refinements of the basic phenomenological reduction, which would be the minimum condition necessary to claim phenomenological status for one's research.

As noted by Giorgi (2009, 88), to assume the 'transcendental phenomenological' perspective, for Husserl, means to view the object of

consciousness from the perspective of a pure and universal level consciousness, in order to know more precisely what makes the object a specific example or instance of the type of phenomenon it is. In Giorgi's approach, what he defines as a version of descriptive 'pre-transcendental' Husserlian phenomenology, the term 'pre-transcendental' implies the adoption of an attitude of a specifically human mode of being conscious, more appropriate in the investigation of lived experiences and human lifeworld phenomena (A. Giorgi & B. Giorgi, 2008a). In his approach, the subjectivity of consciousness that is the base of the lived experience under investigation, is understood to be existing and related to the world, and it concerns both the participants and the researcher of the phenomenological study. The phenomenological (scientific) attitude, as it has been described by Giorgi, is also the position taken in the study presented in this thesis.

According to Giorgi (1992), phenomenological reduction as a methodological device was originally invented by Husserl for the purpose of making research findings more precise. As stated by Giorgi, the point of departure in a phenomenological study, for Husserl, is that even though the things and events encountered by the researcher seem to have 'existence' within our natural attitudes, the phenomenological attitude and reduction direct her/him to step back, and to consider all objects as 'presences'. While examining and describing the object, the researcher then refrains from saying that the object actually exists as it presents itself, and says that the object presents itself 'in this particular form'. From a phenomenological perspective, that is more rigorous than to claim that it is a 'real' object. The other point in regard to phenomenological reduction is that one brackets (puts aside, suspends, or renders non-influential) all past knowledge and experience about the phenomenon encountered in order to be fully present to what is directly given, so that it has a chance to present itself in its fullness in that situation.

It is the methodological starting point of this study that such a description of an experience by another can be the basis of the phenomenological analysis of the empirical data. Although the phenomenologist within the tradition of phenomenological philosophy uses self-knowledge as the object of the reflective analysis, in the scientific tradition it is more common to concentrate on the experience of the other rather than oneself. According to Giorgi (2009, 112-113), phenomenological analyses are not dependent upon the self-report of the phenomenological researcher, and one can apply the phenomenological method to

the exploration of the phenomenal world of the other. Giorgi's point is that although the phenomenon under investigation must present itself to the experience of the phenomenologist, the mode of being present can be indirect as well as direct. Hence, in a phenomenological empirical study, it is the researcher who adopts the phenomenological attitude and reduction, and not the informant who describes the lived experience the researcher is interested in.

The specialized attitude that is expected from the phenomenological researcher within the phenomenological reduction, thus, is different from the 'natural attitude' of the research participants. When the participant's attitude is regarded as natural (or 'pre-reflective') attitude, it is assumed that while describing what s/he is living or has recently lived through, the participant is speaking from a 'commonsense' perspective, and assumes that everything s/he says is understood by the listener based on a similar perspective. The researcher, then, within a phenomenological attitude and reduction, when analyzing the participants' descriptions, takes all objects that the participants describe to be subjectively construed 'givens'; fully embedded within the desires and interpretations within which the experiencer perceived and understood them. As noted earlier in this study, no epistemological claim is made of the actuality of the givens, but what matters is 'how' they appeared to be for the consciousness of the participant. While regarding the consciousness of the describer as an existing, individuated, and worldly consciousness, the meanings bestowed on the 'presences' are considered to reflect her/his individual, worldly subjectivity (A. Giorgi, 2009, 181-182).

It is the assumption of the phenomenological descriptive approach that meanings contained in the lived experiences of individuals can be expressed through speech or action, and the expressions of others can be understood and precisely described by the researcher (see A. Giorgi, 1989). It is possible by the adoption of the phenomenological attitude and reduction, and the use of the method Husserl calls 'free imaginative variation', based on intentional, conscious acts. This idea of Husserl is based on his theory of meaning, and his distinction among the intentional (signifying, fulfilling, and identifying) acts of consciousness (see A. Giorgi, 2009, 132-134). In Husserl's schema, the consciousness enacts a 'signifying act', which emptily establishes a meaning that seeks to be 'fulfilled'; that is, is directed toward an object that will satisfy its specific but empty meaning. Hence, it is the signifying act that initiates a meaning and the act of 'identification' that verifies it, based upon one or

several ‘fulfilling’ acts. This is particularly challenging because there can be several objects that might come close to satisfying the meaning. However, within the schema, consciousness will continue to seek the precise solution until the object satisfies the meaning completely. For Husserl, the method of free imaginative variation is particularly helpful in differentiating between partial objects of fulfillment and those that fulfill the (empty) meaning precisely. Based on the use of the intentional acts, and the imaginative variation of the content of the acts, one may test their immediate sense in order to become sure of its correct invariant sense.

Based on the adopted phenomenological orientation, it is thus assumed that the concrete expressions of the lived experiences of others, lead the researcher to have an access to the ‘inner meaning dimensions’ of the experience of the others, from the chosen disciplinary perspective. This is possible by the means of the above mentioned, specific attitude and reduction, the method of free imaginative variation based on conscious acts, and the constitution of the more ‘generalized meanings’. A “constituent”, in this frame of reference, is a part (or a moment by Husserl) that is “mindful of its role in the whole” (A. Giorgi, 2009, 102). That is why the researcher, while formulating the structure and delineating the constituents, has to be mindful that the meaning constituents are interrelated. It also means that the unifying structure, as a result of the phenomenological descriptive analysis, is the relationship among the constituents.

3.3 PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH IN THIS STUDY

It has been stated by Giorgi (see A. Giorgi, 1985, 1992, 1997, 2009), who can be named as one of the most influential phenomenologists of our time, that to make phenomenological scientific claims in the strongest sense one would have to use some version of Husserl’s phenomenological method, along with certain other key procedures of a scientific method. Another point addressed by Giorgi, is that before applying and following the procedures of phenomenological reduction to descriptive data, one has to make a clear distinction, whether s/he would like to perform a philosophical or a scientific analysis. That is why, in this thesis, the main features of Husserl’s (transcendental) phenomenological philosophical method are presented first, followed later by the main characteristics of Giorgi’s (pre-transcendental)

scientific version (exhibited in Table 2), and its application to the descriptive data of this study (in chapter five).

3.3.1 Husserl's phenomenological philosophical method

Husserl's (1983) phenomenological philosophical method consists of three steps, which have been illustrated as the main features of the three methodical steps in Table 1 below as follows.

Table 1. Husserl's phenomenological philosophical method

(1) Assuming the phenomenological attitude as an attitude of transcendental consciousness.	One has to break from the natural attitude, and regard everything from the perspective of consciousness, and then, after assuming the transcendental attitude, view the objects of consciousness from the perspective of essential consciousness.
(2) Applying the method of free imaginative variation.	One needs to focus upon an example or specific instance of the object of the transcendental consciousness, and imaginatively vary all the factors that would have an effect on the specificity of the object, in order to know more precisely what makes the object a specific example or instance of the type of phenomenon it is.
(3) Describing the essence of the phenomenon.	Once one feels that the essence of the phenomenon has been determined, the essence is described, and neither adding to nor subtracting from what is present.

As presented by Giorgi (2009, 87-88), in the *first step* of Husserl's phenomenological philosophical method one must assume the phenomenological attitude as an attitude of transcendental consciousness. However, what it means is that two different level attitudes are actually assumed. One first has to break from the 'natural attitude', that is the attitude of everyday life, where most things are simply taken for granted, and consider everything from the perspective of how they are experienced, regardless of whether or not they would actually exist in the way they are being experienced. This means that the natural attitude and all that belongs to it, including scientific knowledge, is put 'out of play', since none of the assurances of the natural attitude can be used as valid bases for phenomenological knowledge claims (A. Giorgi, 2009,

10). The researcher then needs to assume an attitude of transcendental consciousness, which means an attitude of using the transcendental reduction, and the objects and acts of consciousness belonging to any “consciousness as such” (A. Giorgi & B. Giorgi, 2003, 246). In transcendental attitude, a human mode of consciousness is considered as one type of consciousness among any imaginable consciousness, and the interest of the researcher thus is to receive the most universal findings possible. For Husserl, this mode of pure, flowing, and non-human consciousness can be actually experienced with the proper attitude).

The *second step*, as noted by Giorgi (2009, 88-89), is to focus on an example or a specific instance of the object of study, and to apply the method of free imaginative variation in order to determine what is essential about it. It means that, while varying all the factors that would have an effect on the specificity of the object of the transcendental consciousness, one wants to know more precisely how to articulate what makes the object a specific example of instance of the type of phenomenon it is. Once the researcher believes that the essence of the phenomenon has been determined, the next step is to describe it as accurately as possible. This means that one must neither add to nor subtract from what is present. As noted by Giorgi (2009, 89), the major implication of the *third step* is that description is favored rather than other philosophical alternatives, for example, such as interpretation, construction, or explanation.

As stated by Giorgi (2000b), if one were truly limited to the literal interpretations of Husserl on research practices, one would either have to become a philosopher or else dismiss Husserlian phenomenology as irrelevant for the human sciences. Therefore, Giorgi (2008), according to himself, introduced modifications in the steps of the Husserl’s philosophical method so that applying the method to descriptive data would result in scientific results, based upon the criteria of phenomenology, and the logic of research. His purpose was to develop a modified Husserlian approach primarily for use with psychological phenomena, but generic enough to be applied to any human (or social) science that works with human beings. For Husserl, a more secure founding for scientific knowledge would start with consciousness.

3.3.2 Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological approach

When developing his descriptive phenomenological method, Giorgi (2008, 34), was primarily concentrating on the work of Edmund Husserl (1970, 1983). According to himself, it was Giorgi's intention to develop an alternative method for the natural science approach, applicable for human (or social) sciences, since "humans cannot be reduced to the level of things" (A. Giorgi, 2009, 70-71). By 'human science', he refers to an approach to human phenomena that "respects the essential characteristics of humanness throughout the research process, from the conception of the design to the writing of the report". Giorgi's aim (2009, 14) was to follow a generic model of science, one broader than that which guides the natural sciences. That is, a model of science that would allow for empirical objects as well as objects that are 'given' in an expanded empirical sense, and would be open to qualitative as well as quantitative data.

For Giorgi (2009, 98), no claim that an analysis is phenomenological can be made without the assumption of the phenomenological attitude and reduction. Thus, according to Giorgi, to qualify a qualitative scientific method as a descriptive phenomenological approach one would have to employ description within the attitude of the phenomenological reduction, and seek the most invariant meanings for a context. However, for Husserl, there are different levels of phenomenological reduction, as presented above. Therefore, a follower of Husserl, in phenomenological philosophy, would use the transcendental phenomenological reduction, and assume an attitude that one transcends the perspective of human consciousness. At the level of human science, however, the scientific phenomenological reduction is required, which, in Giorgi's approach, is a "pre-transcendental phenomenological reduction". Within this reduction, the objects of experience, based on the conscious acts of the researcher, are reduced to "phenomena as presented". Therefore, for Giorgi (2009), although the phenomenological, scientific reduction philosophically speaking is not as radical as the transcendental reduction, it is still legitimate to call it 'phenomenological'.

As stated by Giorgi (2009, 121-125), the main criterion for data collection, when applying the phenomenological approach to science, is that one seeks as complete a description as possible of the lived experience under

investigation. Since humans are able to communicate the lived experience to others by language, information can be obtained by asking a person to describe the experience s/he has lived through either verbally or textually, and as concretely and precisely as possible. Either way, spoken expressions are used as a medium for accessing the situation of the other and describing it precisely as 'given' in the experience. That is why phenomenological research, according to Giorgi (2009, 121-125), is heavily dependent upon linguistic ability, both that of the research participants and the research analyst. However, the researcher has to take the prevailing language as it exists and try to make the meanings of the expressions more precise. In addition, the researcher attempts to stay away from disciplinary and conceptual jargon while trying to describe the experiential lived level exactly as lived and intended by the experiencer.

3.3.3 Obtaining descriptions of the lived-through experiences

In phenomenological research, the descriptions are often obtained by interviews which are recorded first, and then transcribed. That is also the case in this study, as sixteen physiotherapy students from different study years were interviewed, and the recorded interviews were then transcribed verbatim by the same research-interviewer. However, when consulting the literature, there are certain criteria for conducting a qualitative research interview that are considered critical in phenomenological study. Creswell (1998, 122), for example, emphasizes the in-depth nature of the phenomenological interviews, the task of obtaining descriptions from persons who have experienced the phenomenon being studied, and the challenge of asking appropriate questions and relying on informants to discuss the meaning of their experiences. Kvale (1996), for his part, emphasizes the aim of the researcher-interviewer to understand the research subject by staying open to the experience of the interviewee, including an attempt to bracket foreknowledge, and a search for invariant essential meanings in describing the experience.

Although the different aims and methods of the individual and group interviews are presented in the literature, also similarities between the two approaches are notable. When being linked to in-depth interview strategies, individual interviews are preferred (see Kvale, 1983, 1996). Group interviews are

often used in relation to thematic, semi-structured or focus group interviews, while social constructions of experiences are desired. In addition, it has been suggested that, in a group interview situation, rich data of the participants' lived experiences can be obtained (see Creswell, 2007). In this study, most of the interviews were obtained within a pair or a group situation. However, obtaining concrete expressions of individual experiences is highlighted as a goal of each interview, instead of discussion about the experiences within a group. In that sense, the interview situations are a combination of collecting from individuals data which concerns lived experiences, within the presence of one or more other research participants.

Based on the literature, it is more common to use small rather than large numbers of research participants in phenomenological research. This may be due to the fact that the phenomenological analysis is truly laborious, since many differentiated meanings need to be discovered and integrated (Giorgi, 2009, 36). In qualitative research literature, in general, it has been suggested that ten in-depth interviews may represent a reasonable size of data (Creswell, 2007). In a case study approach, in turn, attention may be focused on a single case which is examined 'in depth' (Edwards, 1991, 54). However, it has been stated by Giorgi (2009, 198) that it is the structure of the phenomenon that is sought in phenomenology, and not the individualized experience of the phenomenon. That is why more than one research subjects should always be required, because it is important to have variations in the raw data. Nevertheless, what has to be counted in phenomenological research is not the number of subjects, but rather the number of instances of the phenomenon that are contained in the descriptions.

Giorgi (2009), if compared to Creswell (2007) and Kvale (1996), speaks in a slightly different manner about the many concerns of the phenomenological interviewer. He notes that, although the main criterion for a phenomenological interview may be easily stated, achieving this aim is not as easy as it sounds. After pointing out the danger that the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee may be too distant or too intimate, Giorgi then suggests that if a researcher wants a deeply self-revealing experience to be articulated, perhaps an intimate friend ought to be the participant – but if one is seeking a rather ordinary experience, then strangers could be the participants. However, according to Giorgi, a certain level of sensitivity and skill, or at least a general awareness of these issues, is required of the research-

interviewer, before embarking on a phenomenological research project (A. Giorgi, 2009, 121-125).

Among the main criteria for phenomenological research, Giorgi (2009, 121-125) seeks to address the point that, in phenomenological research, it is important that one carefully considers the appropriate length of an interview for the phenomenon being studied. By this Giorgi refers to a sense of proportion relative to the phenomenon being studied; a requirement to achieve a sufficiency of data. Kvale (1996, 132) suggests that also the later analysis and reporting should be kept in mind during the interview. It means paying attention to the dynamic aspects of the questions, and knowing what needs to be asked and why. Besides, all of the data that are collected have to be transcribed and analyzed, a demand which originates in the holistic perspective of phenomenology.

Interview data, as noted by Giorgi (2009, 124), may also be too abstract or general, or consist of opinions or attitudes rather than concrete and detailed descriptions. That is why the question posed by the researcher should invite the interviewee to focus upon a specific situation that he or she actually experienced, and try to describe it as concretely as possible. Kvale (1996, 132-133) talks about introducing (or opening) questions which may yield spontaneous and rich descriptions of the phenomenon of interest provided by the informants. According to Kvale, the informant's answer may also be extended by the skilled interviewer, presenting 'follow-up' or 'probing' questions, and asking the informant to give more examples or to say something more about the event or situation being described.

However, as stated by Giorgi (2009, 125), there is no perfect description, in the sense that every aspect of a lived-through event is portrayed accurately. So, there will always be embedded parts of the lived-through experience that will not be portrayed. Giorgi continues that there can, nevertheless, be adequate descriptions, containing enough depth and detail so that new insights or knowledge about the phenomenon can be obtained. By this he means, that the adequate descriptions allow the phenomenal world of the participant to reveal itself, so that the structure of that phenomenon can be described. According to Giorgi (2009, 125), such descriptions are not that difficult to obtain and so a research program can be sustained with this approach.

3.3.4 The steps of the descriptive phenomenological method

While founding his descriptive phenomenological method primarily on Husserl's ideas of phenomenological philosophy, Giorgi (1985, 1997, 2009) made modifications in the steps of the philosophical method to make it more suitable for scientific purposes. In his earlier text, when presenting a sketch of his phenomenological method, Giorgi (1985) defines four essential steps of the (psychological²⁶) phenomenological method. The four steps begin with the situation where the researcher is faced with a written, or a spoken and transcribed, description of a specific phenomenon. The steps are: (1) reading to gain a general sense of the whole statement, (2) discrimination of meaning units, (3) transformation of everyday expressions into psychological language with emphasis on the phenomenon being investigated, and (4) synthesis of transformed meaning units into a consistent statement of the structure of the event.

Later, when presenting the criteria necessary in order for a qualitative scientific method to qualify as phenomenological in a descriptive sense, Giorgi (1997) separates five basic steps of the one would have to employ, as follows: (1) collection of verbal (written or spoken) data, (2) reading of the data, (3) dividing of the data into parts, (4) organization and expression of raw data into disciplinary language, and (5) synthesis or summary of the data. He also notes that the steps delineated in phenomenological data analysis are those that any qualitative researcher, regardless of perspective or theory, would have to follow. However, it is the way in which the steps of the method are implemented, with phenomenological guidelines, which makes it different from others.

In a newer text, Giorgi (2009) explores the data collection phase separately from the phase of the analysis of descriptions, and presents the concrete steps of the phenomenological method as follows after the data has been obtained and, if necessary, transcribed: (1) read for sense of the whole, (2) determination of the meaning units, (3) transformations of participant's natural attitude expressions into phenomenologically and disciplinarily sensitive expressions, and (4) writing of the general structure of the experience. Besides, obtaining concrete and detailed

²⁶ Refers to the sense Giorgi calls the method from the perspective of his primarily psychological research interest.

descriptions of the lived-through experiences in which the researcher is interested is the main criterion for the data collection phase of the phenomenological study.

In a more recent publication (B. Giorgi, 2011), one extension was applied to Giorgi's phenomenological method, although the steps of the method otherwise were fairly similar to those above. They are: (1) the adoption of the correct attitude, (2) obtaining the sense of the whole of each participant description, (3) the discrimination of meaning units, (4) the transformation of meaning units, and (5) the synthesis of transformed meaning units. The additional step was, (6) the determination of variations of structures and/or constituents, focusing on the use of the structure as a guide for a deeper understanding of the data, and for presenting the empirical and psychological level variations in the constituents.

In summary, the descriptive phenomenological method, as a method of phenomenological analysis that has been developed by Giorgi (1985, 1997, 2009) based on Husserl, begins with obtaining concrete descriptions, and ends up with using the structure (or structures) of the experience of the phenomenon of interest as a guide for reflecting the data in more detail, and thus can be presented as six essential steps (which have been assembled in Table 2 below). However, one change in the terminology of the original text has been made for the purpose of this study: since the primary interest for Giorgi was to adapt the phenomenological method for psychological purposes, the term psychological has been replaced with the term "disciplinary," as he wanted to modify the method to make it suitable for all the other human science disciplines as well. Later (in Chapter 4), when presenting the application of Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method to this study, each methodical step will be explained more thoroughly.

Table 2. The steps of Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method

<p><i>(1) Assuming the phenomenological attitude and disciplinary perspective, and obtaining concrete descriptions of experiences</i></p> <p>At the beginning of the study, the researcher assumes the attitude of phenomenological reduction, a disciplinary perspective, and is mindfully sensitive to the type of phenomenon being researched, and begins by obtaining concrete descriptions of experiences from others who have lived through a situation in which the phenomenon under study has taken place.</p>
<p><i>(2) Reading to gain a sense of the whole</i></p> <p>After obtaining concrete descriptions of a specific phenomenon and having those descriptions transcribed, the researcher, by assuming the above complex attitude, reads the entire descriptive data in order to establish a sense of familiarity with it.</p>
<p><i>(3) Constituting meaning units</i></p> <p>When a sense of the whole has been established, the researcher, maintaining the above attitude, goes back to the beginning, starts to re-read each description, and constitutes meaning units within the descriptions. In other words, each time the researcher experiences a transition in meaning in the description from the specific attitude, s/he makes a mark on the transcript. At the end of this step the entire description is broken into parts.</p>
<p><i>(4) Transforming the everyday expressions into phenomenologically and disciplinarily sensitive expressions</i></p> <p>After completing the previous step, the researcher, with the same attitude, transforms each meaning unit into expressions which are more directly revelatory of the disciplinary meaning contained in the participant's expressions. The process of writing the transformations may require several phases. The end result of the step is a series of transformed meaning units.</p>
<p><i>(5) The synthesis of meaning units into a consistent structure</i></p> <p>One outcome of the method is the description of the general structure of the empirical experience representing the phenomenon as lived.</p>
<p><i>(6) Determination of variations</i></p> <p>While a single structure comprehending all of the data is desirable for the sake of efficiency, sometimes different structures have to be written in order to account for all of the data. In any case, the structure or structures are used as a guide for a deeper understanding of the data. Sometimes there are variations in the constituents that comprise the structures and these variations are presented as another type of outcome.</p>

3.3.5 Object of this study

The preliminary research interest of this study, how assessment is lived and experienced by undergraduate students related to a work-placement, leads to the acknowledgement of the object of the study as a subjective lifeworld phenomenon and an experiential 'given'. The nature of the phenomenon of interest as a 'given' refers to as the object of experience as a 'presence' for the consciousness of the student, and is rendered precisely as present in the experience. The participants of the study as conscious living persons, thus, are considered inseparable parts of their experiential and subjective lifeworlds. The student assessment process, on the other hand, as an educational and experiential phenomenon is considered inherently contextual and always related to the environment. This attitude concerns all participants in the research process as well as the execution of the empirical study.

The research interest, in this study, lies in the experiences of others, the lived-through assessment experiences of the undergraduate students. From a phenomenological empirical perspective, what is being sought is the actual experiential living of the other, which one cannot access directly. However, one may access the experiential and spontaneous living of others by means of simultaneous or retrospective descriptions, as expressions of the experienced phenomenon. In this study, the latter means were used. Since one is able to communicate the experience to others, for example, in the form of written or spoken expressions, information can be obtained from others by asking them to describe their experiences, either verbally or textually, and as concretely and faithfully as possible. Either way, language and conscious acts are used as a medium, for accessing the situation of the other and describing it precisely as a 'given'. Hence, the adoption of phenomenological attitude and reduction, in this study, provides access to the experiences of others, using language as a medium for accessing the situation of the other retrospectively, and describing it as presented directly to the consciousness of the researcher.

Therefore, when asking the participants of this study, as persons who have experienced the phenomenon of interest, to recount their concrete living of the situation, it is assumed as a valid mode of access to a more comprehensive understanding of (or new insights into) the student assessment process, as a lived-through experience of the student related to a higher educational setting, and as a 'presence' for the consciousness of the researcher. In other words, the employment

of the phenomenological method, in this study, has for its purpose the examination of the student assessment process related to a work-placement as a 'phenomenon'; that is, the object as it presents itself for the consciousness of the experiencer, but not necessarily as it 'is' in itself. That is the precise meaning of the phenomenon in this phenomenological study. Thus, the phenomenological framework to assessment as a lived-through experience of the student, here focuses on the meaning of an aspect of the experiential lifeworld of others, within a limited situation, from an educational perspective.

While adopting the applied phenomenological stance, it is assumed that it is more rigorous to acknowledge that scientific knowledge is dependent on consciousness, and phenomenology as a philosophy and a research methodology is concerned with how any object whatsoever that can be experienced is related to consciousness. Furthermore, it is assumed that obtaining concrete expressions of the experiences of others as the raw data of this study, partially fulfills the descriptive requirement of the applied phenomenological method. This means that the 'first-order' descriptions provided by the students are an 'opening' into their educational lifeworlds that are shareable, and the researcher can 'access' that world by understanding the students' expressions. The other part of the descriptive requirement is that the analyses, the meaning discriminations and transformations, and the intuitions into eidetic data, all take place in the consciousness of the researcher.²⁷ Therefore, the claim that the analyses and results, in this study, come from the direct consciousness and conscious acts of the researcher, and that they in that sense satisfy the phenomenological and scientific criteria, form the basis for the epistemological claim of the study. Accordingly, the concepts of subjectivity²⁸ and intentionality²⁹ as the essential features of the worldly³⁰ consciousness, are acknowledged as the determinatives of the applied phenomenological approach, and the ontological commitment of this study.

Since phenomenology deals with consciousness and its objects, the phenomenological reflecting on the lifeworld incident in this study, from an educational perspective, takes it as a topic for asking: in what essential way the 'educational' shows itself in the lived experience of the undergraduate student? Thus,

²⁷ See A. Giorgi, 2009, 96-98.

²⁸ In the sense of our bodily-subjectivity as the basic source of intentionality.

²⁹ In the sense that a 'given' something is always experienced as something.

³⁰ In the sense of our relatedness with the world, its objects and other human beings.

to see the essential structure which is present in the phenomenon that appears to the consciousness of the researcher as the description of the experience, the researcher must turn all her attention upon the consciousness which she has of that experience. It is there, within the consciousness of that experience, that the essential structure appears as a 'phenomenon' intended by the consciousness of the researcher. Moreover, it is only through an analysis of that intentional structure that the researcher can come to know all that can be possibly known regarding the object of which she is conscious. However, as pointed out by Giorgi (2009), each of the modes of intending the experience as the experience of something, has an intentional structure which is peculiar to it. Therefore, in order to come to know the object that is present to her consciousness, from an educational perspective, the researcher then must analyze each of the separate modes by which she intends the object in question. From a thorough analysis of these modes of intentionality, the researcher will be able to 'see' and to describe the essence which is present in the phenomenon which 'appears' to her consciousness as a phenomenological educational researcher.

3.3.6 Summary of the phenomenological approach

This study reports on research into undergraduate students' lived experiences of assessment, related to work-placements. As such, it aims for a phenomenological and educational perspective to certain lifeworld events, from the perspective of the person living and going through that event. This means that the object of study is viewed as a phenomenon of the subjective lifeworld and as an immediate given; that is, as lived and intended by 'subjects' while going through the event through the acts of consciousness. The aim of the researcher then is to articulate the intentional objects of the experiences, based on phenomenological analyses of descriptions of the lived-through experiences, within the constraints of intuitive or presentational evidence, and as free as possible from presuppositions. Thus, by the means of the phenomenological attitude and reduction, and bracketing of past knowledge about the phenomenon being experienced, the researcher describes what presents itself³¹

³¹ In this case, what is directly lived and experienced by the students, and further presented as descriptions of that experience to the consciousness of the researcher.

precisely³² as it presents itself to the consciousness of the experiencer, neither adding nor subtracting from it, and withholds any existential affirmation that the phenomenon actually exists in the way the experiencer describes it.

In this thesis, a phenomenological descriptive approach is employed to a lifeworld description, for the examination of the lived-through experiences of others, and acquiring essential scientific knowledge of the phenomenon of interest. Basically, what is being sought is the experiential world of others. Since there is no direct access to this world as experienced by others, it has to be accessed indirectly through expressions of the lived experiences of others, produced by those who either have lived or are living through the experiences under examination, simultaneously or retrospectively. Thus, information can be obtained from others by asking them to describe their concrete experiences of the conditions, in which one is interested. The concrete descriptions of the lived-through experiences are then used as a medium for accessing the situation of the other and describing it precisely as present to the consciousness of the second order describer.

The phenomenon of interest to the study is regarded as a lifeworld phenomenon and a phenomenal 'given', or a 'presence', for the subjective consciousness of the experiencer, regardless of whether or not it actually 'is' the way it is being experienced. Within phenomenology, this is possible because the objects of intuition do not, as such, have to have the characteristic of being 'real'³³ objects. Besides, even when they are experienced as 'real', that characteristic needs to be bracketed and the objects are then analyzed in their 'phenomenal' status. A phenomenon, within the methodological framework of this study, is thus anything that can present itself to our consciousness, and is considered precisely as something present to consciousness. Therefore, the 'reality' of the object of the description, is not an issue for the phenomenological researcher.

Focusing on the work-placement assessment process as an experiential phenomenon and a phenomenal 'given', and describing the phenomenon of interest as experienced by others, means engagement with the phenomenological scientific reduction and educational perspective, and acknowledgement of a specifically

³² In the sense of understanding the object that is present to consciousness exactly as it is experienced, and bracketing of past knowledge or nonpresented presuppositions about the given object (A. Giorgi, 2009, 90-92).

³³ Referring to Husserl's (1983) understanding of "real" and "irreal" objects, and Giorgi's (2009, 67-68) definition of experiential objects and the broadened sense of "empirical".

human consciousness as the source of phenomenological reduction and description. Therefore, the lived-through experiences under investigation are first expressed by those who have lived through the phenomenon of interest, and are then analyzed and described by the researcher, precisely as present in the raw data, for the consciousness of the researcher. The methodological position as such draws from the phenomenological descriptive approach as a legitimate and theoretically justified research procedure, for acquiring essential scientific knowledge about the research phenomenon, and describing it precisely as a phenomenon of the subjective lifeworld, from a chosen disciplinary perspective.

In this study, the educational aspects of the lived-through experiences are highlighted, while acknowledging that they cannot be 'isolated' from other disciplinary aspects. Even though the educational perspective offers a 'limited' perspective toward the lifeworld description, it does not have that 'limiting' effect on how the events under examination were actually lived by the experiencer. Neither are the educational (or any other disciplinary) meanings 'ready-made' in the naïve descriptions of the lived-through events. Moreover, the concrete expressions of the lived-through events are understood as subjectively construed 'givens', fully embedded within the subjective assumptions and interpretations within which the participants perceived and understood them. Therefore, the educational meanings of the descriptions need to be 'teased out' by the researcher, by assuming the above mentioned complex attitude, bracketing all presuppositions of the phenomenon being experienced, and describing the aspects of the experience according to the disciplinary and research interest. The description of the structure, and the most invariant constituents of the experience in this study are thus a second order description that highlights the educational understanding of the lifeworld phenomenon.

Although the original experience under examination, comes from another, it is assumed that the phenomenological claim is met, because all of the analyses are given directly to the consciousness of the researcher. Another claim is that the phenomenological analysis by the researcher is conducted with an intersubjective attitude, as it is assumed that the critical other is able to access the transformations lived through the primary researcher, and the procedures and strategies performed at each stage of the process. These claims also form the basis of the argument that scientific, phenomenological and educational knowledge is

produced in this study. Instead of using self-reports, which is typical in a philosophical tradition, concrete descriptions of experiences by others are used as the basis of the systematic and rigorous research process. The argument for the educational perspective is that although the 'educational' ³⁴ is given in the phenomenal world of an individual experience, it is not 'ready-made' and waiting to be 'picked up' by the researcher. That is why the educational perspective is necessary to perceive the educational dimensions of the experience, and as the assessment process is the phenomenon under study, a special sensitivity to assessment events is also required. Accordingly, the subjective characteristics and individuated experiential meanings and their educational implications have to be reflected, and the 'educational' has to be constituted by the researcher. The educational aspects of the lived experiential meanings thus have to be 'teased out', on the basis of their concrete descriptions, by means of the method of free imaginative variation and the use of intentional (signifying-fulfilling-identifying) acts of consciousness, from the perspective of the research interest.

Giorgi's ³⁵ claim that the descriptive analysis is easier to justify but more difficult to implement, is taken seriously in this study. He refers to the epistemological claim that the results of the descriptive analysis reflect a careful description of the experienced phenomenon precisely as presented to the consciousness of the researcher. The claim implies that no speculative or non-given factors influenced the findings, and thus invites the checking of the findings by the critical other. From a phenomenological perspective, the results of the descriptive approach imply strong knowledge claims, because the results include descriptions of findings rather than theories or hypotheses. Therefore, the second order descriptions constituted by means of the descriptive analysis, are understood as invariant meanings that could be repeated in subsequent research. This is necessary for the scientific claim of this study as well, because scientific findings can only become stronger through such communications.

³⁴ As any other chosen disciplinary aspects, for example, 'psychological' or 'social', would be.

³⁵ See A. Giorgi, 2009, 130-137.

4 THE EMPIRICAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH

For Husserl, the first step of the phenomenological method within a philosophical context would be that the researcher has to assume the phenomenological attitude, break from the natural attitude, and regard everything from the perspective of transcendental consciousness. That is an attitude of a generalized, pure consciousness, which transcends the perspective of human consciousness. As Husserl³⁶ also spoke about other levels of phenomenological reduction, Giorgi³⁷ suggested modifications of the phenomenological method to meet scientific criteria and purposes. For Giorgi, while operating within the methodological framework of phenomenological philosophy, the empirical researcher yet needs to respect the goals and practices of scientific practices. Accordingly, to qualify a qualitative scientific method as a descriptive phenomenological approach, one would have to employ description and seek the most invariant meanings for a context, within the attitude of the phenomenological scientific reduction. With this reduction, the objects of experience are reduced to phenomena as presented to consciousness, but the acts of consciousness correlated³⁸ with such objects would belong to a human mode of consciousness, and not a transcendental one. This complex attitude is then maintained by the researcher throughout the description.

4.1 ASSUMING THE COMPLEX ATTITUDE

In this study, it was the aim of the researcher to operate at a scientific level, and to apply the phenomenological descriptive method for an educational inquiry, for acquiring essential scientific knowledge about the phenomenon of interest. Therefore, before entering to the research process, the researcher assumed the attitude of the phenomenological scientific reduction and an educational perspective, while being mindfully sensitive to the type of the phenomenon being explored. Within that attitude, the researcher assumed that the object of study could (and should) be

³⁶ Husserl, 1977, 1983

³⁷ A. Giorgi, 1985, 1997, 2009

³⁸ Refers to Husserl's (1983) "noetic-noematic correlation" (or relation); by "noesis" he refers to the "act side" of the "act-object-relation," and by "noema" to the "object side" of the same relation.

described precisely as presented to the consciousness of the experiencer, regardless of whether or not the object of experience actually “existed” the way it was being experienced. In the phenomenological descriptive approach, this is possible because of the Husserl’s claims that what can be intuitively presented can also be carefully described, and because the objects of intuition as such do not have to have the characteristic of being “real” objects.³⁹ Even when the objects of intuition are experienced as “real” objects, that characteristic must be bracketed, and the objects are analyzed and described in their “phenomenal” status (A. Giorgi, 1997).

Along with the phenomenological scientific attitude, in this study, an educational perspective, and, thus, a “specific set” toward the research interest, was adopted by the researcher. It was assumed that what would be finally expressed as an outcome of the phenomenological study, had to be constituted by the researcher, while assuming the phenomenological, scientific and educational attitude. The assumption thus was that, in the data collection phase, the potential participants first recount their concrete subjective living of the phenomenon of interest as they experienced it, from the perspective of their natural attitudes, and the obtained material is then viewed in a different light by the researcher. Hence, by focusing on how assessment related to a work-placement was lived and intended as meanings by the participants, the researcher analyses the concrete expressions of others from within the phenomenological scientific reduction, and its educational meaning, precisely as present for the consciousness of the researcher.

4.2 DEFINING THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

The informants of this study were sixteen undergraduate (bachelor) level physiotherapy students, studying at two Finnish higher education organizations (UAS₁ and UAS₂). At the time of the study, a problem-based learning (PBL) approach had been applied to the undergraduate physiotherapy course curriculum for over ten years’ time, in both organizations. The length and design of the course curriculum at

³⁹ Refers to Husserl’s (1983) concepts of the noetic-noematic correlation (or relation) and the intentionality of consciousness, and Giorgi’s (2009, 104-105) modification of the phenomenological descriptive method as an application of the Husserl’s noetic-noematic relation; as a way of entering into the consciousness of the other, and accurately exhibiting the parts of the experience under examination that contain the lived meanings that are the focus of the descriptive task.

both schools was fairly similar, but some differences were also present. In both courses PBL approach was implemented across the entire study program, and work-placements alternated with academic study periods. Based on the features of the applied pedagogical approach at both schools, as outlined in the study program,⁴⁰ learning and instruction was organized around facilitated PBL-tutorials based on various content themes, and supported by fixed resources such as lectures and seminars, practical skills sessions, individual and group assignments, and supervised work-placements and work-life projects. Work-placements at both schools began from the first year of study, and formed altogether almost one fourth of the whole study program. Main differences concerning student assessment related to work-placements, as outlined in the study program, were the different scales and criteria in each school. At UAS₁, students were initially assessed based on a pass-fail assessment scale, during their first work-placement, and, from then, on the grounds of written assessment criteria and a 5-step grading scale (0-5). At UAS₂, students were assessed during all work-placements based on written assessment criteria and outcome levels (fail, fair, good, excellent), and a pass-fail assessment scale.

A summary of the program characteristics of the two participating Finnish higher educational programs is presented in table format (in Table 3) below. Variation in the contextual characteristics can be considered as one of the contextual limitations of the study. However, the role of the context enjoys a special attention in this study anyway, based on the adopted research perspective. The specifying characteristics of the contexts are considered as important presuppositions brought into play by the research participants, the horizontal characteristics of their experiences, and the socio-cultural factors accepted by the individual participants, which are too vital to be “ignored” for the purposes of the study, and it’s disciplinary perspective. As a result, the “price to be paid” while doing a limited contextual study, is the level of generality of the knowledge⁴¹. Nevertheless, the implications of the contextual characteristics need to be considered while presenting and discussing the results.

⁴⁰ The problem-based curricula of both schools have been described more in detail elsewhere (Lähteenmäki, 2005; 2006, Vuoskoski, 2004; 2005; 2006)

⁴¹ See A. Girogi, 2009, 111.

Table 3. Summary of program characteristics of the two participating Finnish higher education programs

Information	Organization one (UAS ₁)	Organization two (UAS ₂)
Program level	Undergraduate (Bachelor level)	Undergraduate (Bachelor level)
Program duration	3,5 years/210 ECTS credits	3,5 years/210 ECTS credits
Entrance requirements	School leavers/Tertiary-transfer students: application through national system, selected based on a combination of academic results and entrance test	School leavers/Tertiary-transfer students: application through national system, selected based on a combination of academic results and entrance test
Yearly intake	Approx 40-50 students	Approx 38-45 students
Implementation of PBL-curriculum	Since 1996, with an overall curricular approach, work-placements alternating with academic study blocks every study-year	Since 1998, with an overall curricular approach, work-placements alternating with academic study blocks every study-year
Assessment methods in use as outlined in the study program	Variety of methods based on student self-assessment, peer-assessment, individual and group assessment, and feedback from multiple sources (teachers, PBL-tutors, workplace supervisors)	Variety of methods based on student self-assessment, peer-assessment, individual and group assessment, and feedback from multiple sources (teachers, PBL-tutors, workplace supervisors)
Total amount of practical skills training in education	Approx 75-80 credits	Approx 75 credits
Total amount and length of work-placements during education	Approx 40-45 credits, varying between 2-5 weeks, from year one	Approx 40-45 credits, varying between 2-6 weeks, from year one
Assessment of work-placements as outlined in the study program	By the teacher and the workplace supervisor, together with student self-assessment: 1 st year based on the pass/fail-scale, and from the 2 nd year based on the 5-step grading scale (fail, 1-5)	By the teacher and the workplace supervisor, together with student self-assessment: based on the pass/fail-scale and four outcome levels (fail, fair, good, excellent)
Assessment form used in work-placements as outlined in the study program	Assessment form with intended goals and achieved outcomes, and general assessment criteria (levels: 1-5) written by student, commented by teacher and supervisor	Assessment form with intended goals and strategies, achieved outcomes, and general assessment criteria (levels: fail, fair, good, excellent) written by student, commented by teacher, supervisor, and peer/s

4.3 DATA COLLECTION

The general aim for the data collection, in this study, was to obtain concrete descriptions of the phenomenon of interest from different year students who positively confirmed having lived through a student assessment process related to a work-placement, within an undergraduate program. In practice, the data were collected by recruiting and interviewing student volunteers from each study year, at two fairly similar organizations (marked as UAS₁ and UAS₂, in Table 3 in section 4.2. and Table 4 below). The aim, however, was not to make comparisons between experiences from different year-courses, or the two organizations. Instead, richness and comprehensiveness of data was desired, in order to give as a general level answer as possible to the question motivating the research: how is the work-placement assessment process present to undergraduate students as a lived-through meaningful experience (that is, as lived and intended as meanings), from an educational perspective?

4.3.1 Recruiting volunteers as participants

After receiving the required ethical and research permissions, potential participants (that is, students from different year-courses, in fairly similar programs, at two higher educational organizations) were approached via email by the researcher. In the email, the participants were informed about the possibility to partake in the research, and that participation was voluntary. The research interest and methods along with the ethical aspects^{42 43} were briefly explained in the email, as well as at the beginning of each interview situation. The need to record the research interviews was also explained. In addition, participants were allowed to choose the time and place of the interview situation, within a given timeframe, depending on whether they preferred face-to-face (at school) or online (by the means of a computer-assisted video-conferencing tool) interviewing. In addition, the participants were able to choose,

⁴² Such as anonymity and confidentiality, the expectations for the participants, and the right of the participant to withdraw from the study at any stage of the project.

⁴³ The original ethical approval notices are not presented as appendices to protect the anonymity of the participants.

whether they felt more comfortable to be interviewed individually, in pairs, or in small-groups.

In the email, it was said that all volunteers, assumedly having experiences of student assessment related to a work-placement, and positively responding to the email, would be accepted as informants for the data collection. In practice, 49 students responded, and were then interviewed by the same research interviewer (the author of this thesis). However, only sixteen of the last interviews, equally from each year course of the two schools, were taken as the subject of this study, and the rest of the interviews are discussed in other forums. This number was due to methodological reasons, the depth research strategies, and the aim of having at least three participants from each study-year. Research based on depth strategies argues that what has to be counted is the number of instances of the phenomenon that are contained in the description (for example, Kvale, 1983; 1996; Creswell, 2007; A. Giorgi, 2009). Therefore, the greater is the amount of data obtained from each participant, full of instances of the phenomenon, the smaller is the number of required participants. The number of at least three participants comes from the importance of having variations in the raw data, so that the generalized patterns of the phenomenon are understood (A. Giorgi, 2009, 192-197). The final number of the sixteen participants of the study consisted of having four students from each year of study, that is, at least three, but equally from both schools.

Although the researcher-interviewer, at the time of the data collection, was working as a senior lecturer in physiotherapy, at one of the participant organizations (UAS₂), she had no previous relationship with the student participants from the other (UAS₁), and was not involved in the teaching or supervision of any of the students during the work-placements, to which the experiences under examination were referring to. In that sense, it could be said that the researcher was completely stranger for half of the participants (from UAS₁), and had some previous acquaintanceship with the other half (participants from UAS₂). Hence, careful consideration of being either a known or an unknown person for the research participants was needed by the researcher, as both aspects have their documented limitations (for example, Kvale, 1983; 1996; Creswell, 2007, A. Giorgi, 2009), while attempting to establish a certain degree of rapport in each interview situation, for telling the retrospective accounts of their experiential episodes.

Table 4. Data summary of the sixteen participant interviews

Organizations (UAS) = university of applied sciences (HC) = health care (EC) = early-childhood	Participants (f) =female (m) = male	Year of study (term I-VII)	Length of Placement	Interview situation & Recorder
UAS ₁ & public / private sector work-placements (HC/HC)	P ₁ (f) / P ₃ (m)	first year (II term)	2 weeks	Digital Wave recorder (group)
UAS ₂ & public sector work-placements (EC/HC)	P ₂ (f) / P ₄ (f)	first year (I term)	2 weeks, 2 weeks	ACP video conferencing, (individual), Tape-recorder (group)
UAS ₁ & private sector work-placements (HC/HC)	P ₅ (f) / P ₇ (f)	second year (III term)	5 weeks	Digital Wave recorder (group)
UAS ₂ & public sector work-placements (HC/HC)	P ₆ (f) / P ₈ (m)	second year (III term)	3 weeks	Digital Wave recorder (group)
UAS ₁ & public / private sector work-placements (HC/HC)	P ₉ (f) / P ₁₁ (f)	third year (VI term)	5 weeks	Tape-recorder, (pair)
UAS ₂ & public / private sector work-placement (HC/HC)	P ₁₀ (f) / P ₁₂ (f)	third year (VI term)	6 weeks	Marratech video conferencing (pair)
UAS ₁ & private / public sector work-placement (HC/HC)	P ₁₃ (f) / P ₁₅ (f)	fourth year (VII term)	5 weeks	Digital Wave recorder (group)
UAS ₂ & private sector work-placements (HC/HC)	P ₁₄ (f) / P ₁₆ (m)	fourth year (VII term)	5 weeks	Tape-recorder (group)

In each interview situation, it was due to the participants' preferred type of interview, how it was recorded. Eleven of the participants (P₁, P₃, P₄, P₅, P₆, P₇, P₈, P₁₃, P₁₄, P₁₅, and P₁₆) chose to be interviewed face-to-face, in small-groups of 4-7 students, in a (PBL-tutorial) group that they were familiar with. Four of the research participants wanted to be interviewed in pairs, one of them (P₉ and P₁₁) face-to-face and the other (P₁₀ and P₁₂) online. Only one student (P₂) preferred an individual interview situation, and chose to be interviewed online. As the positive aspects of both individual and group interview situations in obtaining meaningful data of lived experiences are

appraised in the literature (see Kvale, 1983; 1994; Mishler, 1986; Creswell, 2007), they were both regarded as legitimate strategies for in-depth interviews and obtaining data of individually meaningful experiences. How the interview was recorded varied based on the type of the interview situation. In face-to-face situations, the interviews were recorded with the aid of a portable audio-recorder, and in online situations, with the aid of computers, headset microphones, and video-conferencing software. The characteristics of each interview situation among other background details concerning the final data, are presented (in Table 4) above.

The work-placements of the sixteen participants took place in varying settings under the supervision of different professionals, the length of the placements varying between two and six weeks. Two (P_{10} and P_{12}) of the participants' work-placements were part of the European (Erasmus) student exchange programs, between tertiary level (higher) educational organizations, and thus located outside of Finland. The rest of the placements were in Finland, within varying distances from the university, but all outside the university campus. The length and the environment of the work-placements, among other background details concerning the final data, are presented (in Table 4) above. However, the participant demographics and other variables, such as age or gender of the participant, the length and environment of the work-placement, the profession of the workplace supervisor/s, or the variables related to the interview situation, were not analyzed, as might be typical of quantitative studies in this area.

4.3.2 Collecting the descriptive interview data

In a phenomenological study, what is generally sought in the data collection phase is a concrete and rich description of the participant's lived-through experience, under the direction of a specific question formulated by the researcher. Hence, the researcher wants the participants of the study to express their experiences in which s/he is interested, as faithful as possible to what happened as they experienced it, while trying not to lead them too much.⁴⁴ It means that the researcher is not trying to get the participants to say certain specific things that s/he would then seek in the

⁴⁴ See A. Giorgi, 1997, 2009; Kvale, 1983, 1996.

data, which would be an example of biasing the data. It also means that the basic demographic information about the participants is not only known by the researcher, but the participants are often selected because of the demographic information. In this study, the researcher aimed to steer the participants to express their living of the student assessment process, in relation to a recent work-placement period, and to reveal what they were going through during the process, and in the concrete assessment situations, as much in detail as possible. It was thus assumed that to direct the informants to a specific zone of experience was not prejudicial or against the discovery approach⁴⁵ of the study, as the informants were able to choose themselves, what aspects and specific details of the situations, and how they were present in those situations, they wanted to describe.

In spite of the differences (see Table 4 in section 4.3.1), the concept and script for each interview situation was the same (as seen in the interview plan in Appendix A). As a result, each interview began with a request from the interviewer for the participants, to describe their individual account of living and going through the student assessment process related to a recent work-placement period. It was later followed with another request from the researcher to describe the concrete assessment situations more in detail, and what they were going through in those situations. Hence, there was a gentle focus on the specific research interest, ensuring that relevant descriptive material was obtained for the research purposes, while allowing each participant to choose the aspects of the experience s/he was describing. In each interview, one participant at a time responded each interview question, and when other participants were present, passed on the turn⁴⁶ to the next participant, when feeling ready to do so. However, the interviewer could pose additional questions, or ask an interviewee to specify her/his answer, at any point of the interview situation. Similarly, the interviewees were allowed to ask questions from the interviewer, if they needed clarification to the question, or to add for their previous answer/s, at any point of the interview situation. Yet, at the beginning of each interview, the participants were reminded that individual accounts of the assessment experiences were desired, and not a group discussion of the experiences.

⁴⁵ See A. Giorgi, 2009.

⁴⁶ In practice, in pair or group situations, the participant literally passed on the portable microphone/recorder for the next.

In spite of making efforts to keep each interview as similar as possible with others, one interview situation is never exactly the same with another. In this study, only one of the sixteen participants was interviewed individually, and others chose to be interviewed with a pair or in a small-group. The reason for their choice was not asked by the researcher, but it became clear that the small-groups consisted of the same group members with whom the participants had been working in PBL-tutorials. Even though it was the participants' own choice, and one may logically expect that they thus felt comfortable to express their experiences in front of the peers they were familiar with, it could be seen as a limitation for obtaining rich and faithful descriptions of individual experiences, based on in-depth interviews (see Kvale, 1983; 1996). However, as it is normal in these situations to change background information between the interviewer and the interviewees, for example, if the interviewees feel comfortable within the situation, such communications occurred between the researcher of this study and the interviewees. Hence, there was no reason to suspect that the students were not aware of the goal of the situation, or did not feel comfortable to share their individual experience whilst being exposed to the presence of their peer/s. Before commencing with the interview, participants of the study were required to read a participant information sheet and sign a consent form to ensure their understanding of the study aims and their agreement to participate in it. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, without any requirement to provide an explanation.

The length of the interviews varied between 45 and 90 minutes, and none of the interviewees left before the completion of the interview situation. At the end of each interview, some extra time was available for discussion and debriefing the interview experience. This possibility was used by most of the participants after each interview situation. In addition, all interviewees were encouraged to contact the researcher afterwards by email, if they felt they had forgotten something, were not feeling good after the interview situation, or felt that they were not able to express their individual experience freely. However, none of the participants contacted the researcher afterwards. In the informal discussions after the interviews, most of the participants highlighted their positive experience of the interview situation, and some of them noted how they were able to share also the negative aspects of their

experience, which they had not necessarily been able to do before. None of the participants expressed negative feelings or discomfort at the situation or afterwards.⁴⁷

The steps of the phenomenological analysis of the descriptive data of this study are explained more in detail in the following section (section 4.4). That is, the methodical steps and their justifications are integrated with the examples of the empirical research process. The aim is to make the analysis process transparent, so that the critical other is able to follow the application of the phenomenological method, and its justification, in every step.

4.4 THE STEPS OF THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

The process of data handling and analysis, in this study, began with transcribing all the recorded, audible expressions of the participants' concrete descriptions of their lived experiences. Each description was transcribed verbatim, exactly as expressed by the participant, by the same research interviewer (the author of this study). An important methodological viewpoint, at this stage, is that each description, although transcribed and printed for further purposes of reading and analysis, still remains and is viewed as a description.⁴⁸ Besides, the conditions under which the descriptions of the students' lived-through experiences were obtained were considered as conditions motivating the use of a descriptive strategy,⁴⁹ and the focus of the researcher on the description itself.

Since the research data consisted of subjectively construed descriptions, provided by individual students,⁵⁰ each interview situation was first transcribed in its entirety, and then newly organized into individually constituted descriptions. This was possible because each participant expressed their individual experience one by one, also when the data was obtained in the presence of peer/s. However, while transcribing the individual descriptions, nothing was changed in the form of the original, audible expressions. Both the original transcriptions of each interview situation and the individual descriptions, as well as the original recordings, were

⁴⁷ These notions are based on the recordings in the interview diary, where the researcher documented her observations and experiences after each interview situation.

⁴⁸ Instead of viewing them as texts which need to be interpreted (see A. Giorgi, 2009, 121-126).

⁴⁹ Instead of interpretive strategy (see A. Giorgi, 2009, 121-126).

⁵⁰ Although most of the descriptions were obtained in situations where there were some other students present in the situation as well.

stored in digital format for further analyses. Later, they were all reviewed in several occasions, when it was seen necessary in the analysis process by the researcher. Within a phenomenological framework, it is highlighted that nothing should be left out from the original description in order to avoid the researcher's own prior assumptions, and to be fully present to the concrete phenomenon as presented by the description (see A. Giorgi, 2009, 182). It means that although the researcher is not interested equally in all of the data, it is, nevertheless, all reviewed and analyzed. These guidelines were strictly followed, in this study, and only information, where the anonymity or confidentiality of the participant/s could have been in risk, was replaced by pseudonyms by the researcher, for example, the names and all other identifying information of people. Hence, the individually constituted descriptions, as the raw data of this study, constituted a retrospective recollection of the lived-through work-placement assessment experiences, exactly as expressed in the interview situation by each informant.

In this study, all of the original data, and the spoken expressions of the lived-through experiences, were originally in Finnish. In a similar situation, Perttula (1998), another Finnish scholar also writing his thesis in English, decided not to translate the original research material. The decision was made, because if trying to do so, it would not have been possible to maintain the original form of the participants' spoken expressions. As stated by Giorgi (2009, 127), the descriptive analysis attempts to understand the meaning of the description based solely upon what is presented in the data. That is why the original expressions are maintained unchangeable, until the second and the third step of the analysis, which require gradually transforming the original expressions into more generalized expressions and revealing their disciplinary content more directly. Hence, the justification for the maintenance of the original expressions comes from an attempt for methodological rigor, and the avoidance of bringing in any non-given factors. Therefore, the researcher of this study also decided not to translate the original research material from Finnish to English. However, the change in language follows at the second step of the method, while beginning the process of transforming the meaning units.

4.4.1 The first step of the analysis

Once relevant data of the phenomenon of interest have been obtained (and often transcribed), in a phenomenological study, the steps delineated are those that any qualitative researcher regardless of the methodological approach would have to follow. However, it is the way how the steps of the method are implemented with phenomenological guidelines, which makes the analysis "phenomenological," and different from other approaches (see A. Giorgi, 1997; Norlyk & Harder, 2010). As stated above, when applying the phenomenological method to an empirical study, the researcher of this study assumed the attitude of the scientific phenomenological reduction, while being sensitive to the chosen disciplinary (in this case, educational) perspective, and the aspects of the phenomenon in which she was interested. After the data collection phase, the researcher, while maintaining the complex attitude, then moved into the data analysis process.

In this study, after obtaining and transcribing the sixteen descriptions of the participants' concrete living of the phenomenon of interest as they experienced it, the researcher was then faced with approximately 130 pages of transcribed text. As it is shown in the table (Table 5) below, the first step of the analysis process consisted of going through all the descriptions, while trying to understand the global sense of each individual description as well as the entire data, within the complex attitude mentioned above. In practice, the researcher began the stage by listening to the audible recordings at the same time while going through the transcribed texts, and made corrections to the written texts, when necessary. This was solely based on the ability of the researcher to understand the audible and transcribed expressions of the describer. Since the original and transcribed descriptions both consisted of the spoken expressions of the lived-through experiences in Finnish, which is the first language of the researcher-interviewer, there wasn't any difficulty in understanding exactly the audible and transcribed descriptions.

Table 5. The first step of the phenomenological analysis

<i>(Step 1) Reading to get a sense of the whole</i>
After obtaining concrete descriptions of the lived-through experiences and being faced with the transcribed data, the researcher, within the complex attitude of the phenomenological scientific reduction and an educational perspective, and being mindfully sensitive to the type of phenomenon being researched, read through several times all of the transcribed descriptions in order to establish a sense of familiarity with each description, and the entire data.

At the first step of the analysis process, as noted by Giorgi and Giorgi (2008), the researcher should feel free to read the transcribed texts as often as s/he feels necessary to get a good grasp of the whole. Because of the length of the descriptions, in this study, the researcher felt necessary to read through each description several times, after going through each transcription and listening to its audible expression at the same time. Yet, at this stage of the research analysis, the researcher made no efforts whatsoever to try to clarify or to make more explicit the global sense of the descriptions⁵¹, which was the task of the following steps. This stage also confirmed that nothing had been left out or changed in the form of the original, audible expressions. Hence, during the first step of the analysis, while going through each of the descriptions, the researcher merely operated with a general sense of what each description was about.

While familiarizing with the transcribed descriptions within the assumed complex attitude, a “special set” toward each individual description was thus assumed by the researcher. To adopt a set means to set some limits⁵² on the analysis and to thematize only a particular aspect of a more complex reality. However, while doing so the researcher was aware that the experiential world of the experiencer is always richer and more complex than the adopted “educational” perspective to the lifeworld description. Hence, it was acknowledged by the researcher that each description under examination could have lent itself to another type of disciplinary analysis, depending upon the adopted research interest and perspective. Therefore, while adopting the phenomenological attitude and an educational perspective, and, thus, a “special set” toward description, in this study, it was assumed that the educational reality is not “ready-made” in the experiential world of the experiencer, or simply “seen” in the lifeworld descriptions of the individual students, but rather that it has to be constituted by the researcher.

While going through the raw data, and trying to familiarize with each individual description as well as the data as a whole, the primary goal of the study was kept in mind by the researcher. Since the ultimate goal of the phenomenological descriptive method is to abstract from the individual and concentrate on the phenomenon,⁵³ it was the essential structure of the lived-through educationally

⁵¹ See A. Giorgi 1985, 11-12, 2009, 128-129.

⁵² See A. Giorgi, 2009, 114

⁵³ See A. Giorgi, 2009, 195-199.

meaningful experience in work-placement assessment that the researcher was seeking as an outcome of the analysis process, not the individualized experience of the phenomenon. Therefore, while getting the sense of the whole of the intentional objects of the lifeworld descriptions provided by each individual, with a special sensitivity to the phenomenon being researched, the applied phenomenological reduction demands that the researcher must bracket⁵⁴ all past knowledge about the phenomenon of interest, in order to be freshly present to the current “instant” of it, as it is in the concrete situation in which one is encountering it. This complex attitude then needs to be maintained throughout the process of description.

Hence, at the beginning of the phenomenological analysis, the researcher strived for a presuppositionless and intuitive understanding of what the audible and transcribed expressions were about, while also seeking confirmation about the correctness of the transcribed texts of the students’ spoken expressions. The researcher then carried on reading each description separately, before entering with it to the next step. She also decided not to familiarize herself any more with the theoretical knowledge of the research phenomenon until the empirical analysis was complete. It was assumed that it would support the goal of the researcher to remain open to the research material, the concrete descriptions of the research subject, as it is required in the adaptation of the phenomenological attitude.

Although the primary goal of the study was not to concentrate on the individual, or to seek the individualized experience of the phenomenon,⁵⁵ the lived meanings that get expressed eidetically are based on individuals. As presenting all the individual transcriptions of the sixteen participants of this study would have made this report too lengthy, a summary of the work-placement assessment process each participant underwent, is presented instead in the appendices (see Appendix B). Each summary thus refers to the specifics of the lived (empirical) situation of one research participant, while the general lived meaning of that situation, in the structure of the general lived-through experience (presented in chapter 5.2), gets expressed from an eidetic level educational perspective. In that sense, the interview summaries were constituted for pragmatic reasons, to make the process of reducing the lived

⁵⁴ In other words, to “set aside” or “suspend.”

⁵⁵ The primary goal, in a descriptive phenomenological study, is to seek a structure of the phenomenon as such, regardless of who the individuals are.

experiential meanings into eidetic generalizations more explicit and thus more accessible for critical others.

4.4.2 The second step of the analysis

In the second step of the analysis as seen (in Table 6) below, the phenomenological researcher has to break the descriptions down into manageable units, since one cannot analyze a whole text simultaneously (A. Giorgi, 2009, 129). Hence, in the second step of the phenomenological analysis of this study, once the sense of familiarity with each description and the entire data had been established, the researcher went back to the beginning of each individual description and began rereading it, but this time more slowly. While rereading each description, and being sensitive to the ultimate goal of the analysis (the meaning of the experience), she then constituted “meaning units” within the description. In practice, each description was broken into parts that seemed to convey a delineated but partial meaning of the whole. As noted by Giorgi (1997), the meaning unit discriminations are noted directly on the description whenever the researcher upon rereading the description becomes aware of a change of meaning of the situation, for the person who is describing the lived experience. Thus, each time the researcher of this study experienced “a shift of meaning” in the description that she was rereading, she made a mark at that place in the transcribed text (to see an example of this step, see the first column on the left, in Table 8, in section 4.4.3).

Even though every qualitative research procedure will require this step of breaking the data into smaller parts, the differences between the phenomenological approach and the other approaches emerge with respect to how this “partializing” is done, and how the parts are understood.⁵⁶ In this study, the meaning units were understood to be constituents, that is, parts determined in such a way that they were context-laden and, hence should always be understood as parts of the whole description, and the lived-through experience. However, one must note that at this stage of the analysis, while delineating the meaning units within the complex attitude, and understanding the meaning units as constituents, the researcher changed nothing in the original expressions.

⁵⁶ see A. Giorgi, 1985, 14-15

As pointed out by Giorgi (2009, 129), the phenomenological researcher at the second step of the method, needs to pay attention to three goals while breaking the data into smaller parts⁵⁷. *Firstly*, since the ultimate goal of the phenomenological analysis is the meaning of the experience, the parts to be established should be sensitive to that goal. Thus, the aim of the second step is to establish some “units of meaning,” contained within a description. *Secondly*, since the analysis is also meant to be a disciplinary perspective, the established meaning units need to be sensitive to that perspective. *Finally*, since the phenomenological scientific reduction is to be applied, the phenomenological criteria must be observed. Since the parts (or the meaning units) are constituted by the researcher from a phenomenological and a disciplinary perspective, it makes the constituted meaning units immediately relevant for the task at hand, and the constitution of parts based upon the dimension that is most sensitive to the ultimate goal of the task.

Table 6. The second step of the phenomenological analysis highlighted

<i>(Step 1) Reading to get a sense of the whole</i>
<i>(Step 2) Constituting meaning units</i> When the sense of the whole had been established, the researcher, still maintaining the above attitude, went back to the beginning of each description and began rereading it, and constituted meaning units within the description, while being sensitive to the ultimate goal of the analysis (the structure and the educational meaning of the lived experience). Therefore, each time the researcher, from the specific attitude, experienced a transition in meaning she made a mark on the description. At the end of this step each description was broken into “parts” or “units of meaning.”

Since it was a phenomenological descriptive analysis and an educational perspective of the phenomenon of interest that the researcher of this study aimed for, the meaning units were constituted with these criteria in mind. Therefore, the meaning units within each participant description were established by the researcher, while adopting an attitude which is a synthesis of a phenomenological reduction, an educational perspective, and mindfulness of reading each description as an expression of a lived-through meaningful (that is, as lived and intended as meanings)

⁵⁷ In other words, while constituting the meaning units (see A. Giorgi, 129-130).

experience in work-placement assessment. This means that not just any events as such were deemed worthy of consideration, but rather, a lived-through event (or experiential meaning) had to be an educational one, and relevant to work-placement assessment, that is, assessment events as lived and intended related to a work-placement within ongoing higher educational and student assessment process. The end product of the second step of the phenomenological analysis, in this study, were the sixteen full descriptions broken down into meaning units.

As noted by Giorgi (2009), the purpose of the second step of the analysis is mainly a practical one and as such carries no theoretical weight⁵⁸. Hence, the task of the constituted meaning-units is merely to help the researcher to keep the focus on parts of the whole so that detailed analyses can take place later. It also emphasizes the importance of the next step, since it is how each meaning unit is transformed and contributes to the writing of the essential structure, at the end of analysis process, what ultimately matters in the application of the phenomenological method. However, it is essential for the method that the discriminations take place first, before being interrogated further. This is to allow the “disciplined spontaneity”⁵⁹ to function; that the researcher first discovers and constitutes the relevant meaning units, and then later explicates their actual full import based upon a subsequent analysis.

What also needs to be kept in mind during the second step, is that the meaning units don't exist in the text *as such*, but only in relation to the attitude and the mindset of the researcher. Therefore, what finally stands out depends upon the assumed perspective and the actions of the researcher. For Giorgi (2009), although there are two possible errors⁶⁰ that could take place with respect to discrimination of meaning units, the process is usually self-correcting. By this he means that if the meaning units are too small, the researcher in the next step of the analysis usually finds that meaningful transformations, cannot be written, and thus begins combining the meaning units. If they are too large, the researcher usually finds them too rich or complex, and begins to separate certain parts of the large meaning unit and make smaller ones. In this study, the researcher fairly often decided to change the already established meaning units in the following step, sometimes by making them smaller and sometimes by combining smaller units into a bigger one. Changing meaning

⁵⁸ To read more, see A. Giorgi, 2009, 129-130, 179-180.

⁵⁹ To read more, see A. Giorgi, 1985, 13-14.

⁶⁰ To read more, see A. Giorgi, 2009, 179-180.

units during the process in this way, is perfectly legitimate, since it is the researcher who made the original meaning units in the first place.

A part of the second and the third step of the analysis process of this study are demonstrated in a table format, in the following section (in Table 8, in section 4.4.3), with examples of one participant description, and the same participant description is presented in its entirety in the appendices (as Appendix C), at the end of the study. This participant (P₁₄) example is a fourth year student, who did her five-week work-placement at a private sector organization. The left-hand column in the table (in Table 8) represents the first spontaneous discrimination constituted by the researcher (Step 2), and repeats the words of the participant exactly as she expressed them. Both the second and the third column, in the same table, represent the transformations of the meaning units (Step 3), repeating the words of the participant as much as possible as she expressed them except for the change from first-person expressions into third-person expressions, and the change in language.

The changes in language are due to two reasons: the first change (from first to third person) is to make it clear that the researcher is analyzing the experiences of others than one's own, and, the second (from Finnish to English) is to allow all readers to be able to follow the methodical steps, in English. After all, regardless the fact that the original raw data of the study, and the spoken expressions of the lived-through experiences, were in Finnish, the thesis was to be written in English. However, as stated above, in a previous section, a decision to maintain the original expressions unchangeable, until the second and the third step of the analysis, was made due to the methodological rigor. If one consults the meaning units constituted in the example description as presented in Table 8 (in section 4.4.3), one can see in the discriminated units from the first to the second that transitions in meanings are noted when the participant shifts from "sense of the situation emphasizing independent work and student self-assessment" to "the sense of the supervisors' availability and back-up".

4.4.3 The third step of the analysis

As noted by Giorgi (2009, 130-137), the heart of the descriptive phenomenological method is the third step of the analysis (presented in Table 7 below), which is based on careful re-examination of all the constituted meaning units. During this step, the researcher focuses on elucidating the disciplinary aspects and specifics contained in the data, and try to be especially sensitive to the meaning units most revelatory of the phenomenon under consideration. As the third step is a process, it is important for the researcher to understand that time needs to be spend for dwelling with the data, for changing and varying it (or the parts of it) imaginatively, until one finds the expression that is most suitable. The criterion in this process is that the best transformation revealing as explicitly as possible the disciplinary sense regarding the experience is desired. In practice, the researcher goes through all of the meaning units again, and expresses the disciplinary insight contained in them more directly. At the end of the third step, one has a series of transformed meaning units, forming the basis for the next step, the writing of the structure.

Table 7. The third step of the phenomenological analysis highlighted

<i>(Step 1) Reading to get a sense of the whole</i>
<i>(Step 2) Constituting meaning units</i>
<i>(Step 3) Transforming the everyday expressions into phenomenologically and educationally sensitive expressions</i> After completing the previous step, the researcher again returned to the beginning of each description, and still within the same attitude, transformed each meaning unit into expressions that were more directly revelatory of the disciplinary meaning contained in the participant's expressions. Up until now, the data had remained as the participants expressed them, but to have disciplinary significance the disciplinary sense contained within the data had to be rendered explicit. The change in language (from Finnish to English) was made for the communication of the research process and results to critical others. The process of writing the transformations required several phases. The end result of the step was a series of transformed meaning units.

In this study, after finishing the second step, the researcher again went back to the beginning of each participant description that in the previous step were delineated

into meaning units, and began transforming each meaning unit into expressions more directly conveying the educational sense of what the participants said. Transformations took place by going through all the constituted meaning units of each description, by the means of the conscious signifying-fulfilling-identifying acts,⁶¹ and the method that Husserl (1970) calls free imaginative variation. In practice, the process that was repeated began with a *signifying act*, which emptily posits the most invariant sense that the meaning unit under consideration offered as contributing to the total structure of the lived-through phenomenon, and sought fulfillment. The discovery of the correct invariant sense of the meaning transformation was often achieved after imaginatively performing repeated *fulfilling acts* in order to test whether it satisfied the posited meaning precisely. Unsatisfactory fulfillments were repeatedly recognized. If the fulfillment then met the criteria of the meaning unit as established by the signifying act, and satisfied the meaning completely, then an *act of identification* was ensued. In practice, the researcher while searching the fulfillment of the meaning unit under consideration had to go back to the original raw data contained in the meaning unit several times, to make sure that the invariant sense truly comprehended all of the critical senses contained therein. This process was then repeated until all of the delineated meaning units of each participant description were transformed.

Methodically speaking, during the third step of the analysis, in this study, all the natural attitude expressions contained in the participants' concrete lifeworld descriptions, were transformed into phenomenologically and educationally sensitive expressions, based on careful examination of all the constituted meaning units. To assume an educational perspective towards the data, here implies a certain type of limitation that needs to be acknowledged; that is, a special sensitivity is directed to the meaning units where the educational richness of the lifeworld experience exists, while performing the phenomenological reduction. In other words, since the ultimate goal of the phenomenological analysis, in this study, was the eidetic level educational meaning of the lived-through work-placement assessment experience, each meaning unit was interrogated for revealing especially the educational insights or implications that it was carrying for the lived through phenomenon.

⁶¹ To read about Husserl's schema of signifying-fulfilling-identifying acts, see A. Giorgi, 2009, 130-137.

As implied above, the description of the transformations was not an easy task. Methodologically speaking, the third step not only required the researcher to transform the original expressions into expressions that were more directly disciplinary revealing, but more generalized as well. Hence, what was desired was a transformation that explicitly revealed the disciplinary aspect of the lived-through experience, with respect to the phenomenon under study, and whether or not it would be done in a single transformation or in several, was not important. Since not all meaning units were equally rich, from an educational perspective, the number of transformations varied between different meaning units before reaching the desired fulfillment. From the applied methodological perspective, there is no fixed number of transformations of the meaning units.

Accordingly, changing a meaning unit during the analysis, is a perfectly legitimate action, and is up to the researcher to decide when it is necessary. Besides, certain syntheses in the form of reducing several adjacent meaning units to a single expression took place during the analysis, while transforming meaning units several times. From the applied methodological position, this again is legitimate and implies to perceiving a deeper partial unity of the whole. Still another aspect that needs acknowledgement during the third step, is that meanings within a description can have forward and backward references. That is why analyses of the first part of a description would be too incomplete without awareness of the last part. However, as pointed out by Giorgi (2009), although the task in the third step is challenging for the researcher, the context for formulating the transformation of the meaning units, nevertheless, is one narrower than that employed for the structure as a whole.

The second and the third step of the analysis process, with examples of one participant description, are presented in Table 8 below, while the whole participant description is presented at the end of the report, in the appendices (in Appendix C). While viewing the table, it is noteworthy that the third step of the method may demand several phases.

Table 8. A part of the second and third steps of one participant description

Step 2 Participant's naïve and concrete description broken down into meaning units in the original interview context.	Step 3 Participant's natural attitude expressions transformed to 3 rd person expressions, more revelatory of the phenomenologically and educationally sensitive expressions of the lived-through experience.	Note. * indicates that the researcher's question has been incorporated in the transformation
<p>[1. Jos nyt siis kuvaillette teidän kokemuksia arvioinnista nyt tässä viimisessä harjoittelussa...]</p> <p>Mä olin siis [...] paikassa harjoittelemassa.. ja mulla on ehkä samanlaisia ajatuksia ku [...], että oli hirveesti niinku sellaista itsenäistä tekemistä.. ja sitte niinku korostu oikeestaan enemmän sellanen itsearviointi ..et ei niinkään ollu sitä sellasta aikaa niinku ohjaajilla..</p>	<p>[The student is being asked to describe her assessment experience related to a work-placement..]</p> <p>P₁₄, states that she did her work-placement at [a private sector organization] and that she has possibly similar thoughts with [another student]. P₁₄ states that there was a lot of independent work during the work-placement. P₁₄ states that the situation emphasized more self-assessment [P₁₄ implicitly refers to supervisors' assessment]. P₁₄ states that the supervisors did not have time for assessment as such [P₁₄ implicitly refers to time separately for student assessment].</p>	<p>*P₁₄, a physiotherapy student describes her experience of student assessment related to a work-placement, and states that while there was a lot of independent work during the work-placement, and the workplace supervisors did not have time separately for student assessment, the situation as such emphasized student self-assessment.</p>
<p>2. ja mulla oli itse asiassa niin ihan useampia ohjaajia.. tän harjoittelun aikana.. niin et kyllä niinku ne aina kysy, että.. että miten menee.. ja onks sulla jotain kysyttävää, ja haluutko käydä joitakin asioita läpi.. ja sit.. niin sitte.. sit käytiin, jos oli jotakin niinku pinnalla.. mutta.. mut periaatteessa ei ollu varattu niinku sellasta aikaa sille.. niinku arvioinnille..</p>	<p>P₁₄ states that she actually had several supervisors during this work-placement. P₁₄ states that they [P₁₄ implicitly refers to the supervisors] often asked P₁₄, how she was doing, if she had anything to ask, and whether there was anything that she wanted to go through with them [P₁₄ implicitly refers to the supervisors]. P₁₄ states that if she had something acute, then they [P₁₄ implicitly refers to herself and the supervisors] went through it. P₁₄ states that, in principal, no time was booked separately for assessment as such [P₁₄ implicitly refers to assessment with the supervisors].</p>	<p>P₁₄ states that she had several supervisors at the workplace, who often asked P₁₄, how she was doing, if she had anything to ask, and whether there was anything that she wanted to go through together with the supervisors. P₁₄ states that if she had something acute that she wanted to go through together, then they went through it. P₁₄ states however that, in principal, no time was booked separately for assessment with the supervisors.</p>

4.4.4 The fourth step of the analysis

In the fourth step of the descriptive phenomenological method (presented in Table 9 below), the essential unifying structure of the lived-through phenomenon under examination was articulated by the researcher. In practice, the task was accomplished by carefully examining once again all the insights contained in the last transformed meaning units of each participant description (illustrated in Table 8, and in Appendix C), and comparing and contrasting what would appear as the most diverse ones in order to ascertain if they could have come from the same type of experience. Since the unity, rarely is a single idea, the unifying structure commonly consists of several key constituent meanings and their interrelationships (A. Giorgi, 2009, 166-167).

The task of the researcher, in the fourth step, is not only to try to identify the key constituent meanings - essential for the articulation of the structure of the experiential phenomenon - but also to understand how the constituents related to each other, and how the concrete facts and diverse details could belong to the same phenomenon. As stated by Giorgi (2009), this kind of understanding and writing of the structure, takes a much more global perspective than the transformations themselves required, in the earlier step. Hence, the description of the structure from a chosen disciplinary perspective, although making use of the details of a worldly subjectivity, yet is a generalization of an eidetic type. In practice, the constituents contained in the structure thus were expressed in words quite different from the words used in expressing the separate meaning units. That is why the researcher, when articulating the structure, also aimed not to be too bound up with the language of the transformations.

While completing the step and writing the structure, the researcher was aware that a single structure was not a necessary requirement of the applied phenomenological approach. As pointed out by Giorgi (2009), before writing the structure, the researcher thus needs to consider the type of unity that s/he intuitively appropriate among the specific variations contained in the data. In practice, the researcher of this study spent a lot of time in considering whether the differences concerning the variations of data were small enough to be designated as 'intra-structural' differences, and articulation of one unifying structure, or so large that they had to be designated as 'inter-structural', and articulation of two or more types of the

general structure. The key test in forming the structure is to see whether the structure collapses if a key constituent is removed (A. Giorgi, 2009). In this case, for example, if the meaning that the experiencer wanted to obtain self-knowledge (for acquiring a sufficient understanding of the abilities of self) through assessment encounters were removed, then the structure would not have been a faithful accounting of the sixteen concrete descriptions.

Table 9. The fourth step of the analysis highlighted

<i>(Step 1) Reading to get a sense of the whole</i>
<i>(Step 2) Constituting meaning units</i>
<i>(Step 3) Transforming the everyday expressions</i>
<i>(Step 4) The synthesis of transformed meaning units</i> One outcome of the phenomenological method is the description of the general structure of a lived-through work-placement assessment experience representing the phenomenon as lived. In order to achieve this step the researcher considered all of the data in the form of the transformed meaning units, and synthesized and integrated the insights contained in them into a consistent description of the empirical structure of the lived-through work-placement assessment experience. The criterion was that all of the meanings of the transformed meaning units were at least implicitly contained in the general description.

The structure as a result of this study (as presented in chapter 5), is not a definition of the phenomenon under investigation, but instead an eidetic generalization of the lived meanings, expressed from an educational perspective. Hence, the structure, in this study, depicts how certain lifeworld events that got named by the participants, were lived, which includes experiential and conscious moments seen from an educational perspective. In addition, the structure of the phenomenon as articulated by the researcher may include aspects of the description of which the participant was not her/himself aware. Thus, a disciplinary perspective here implies that lived meanings under examination were based on individuals but got expressed eidetically by the researcher, which means that they are general. That is why the eidetic structure, as a result of this study, in principle, is applicable for more individuals than the persons upon who they were based.

The structures based on empirical factors and expressed from a disciplinary, scientific perspective, are not the same as philosophical, pure and transcendental structures (see A. Giorgi, 2009). Accordingly, the structure articulated

in this study, has its empirical basis for each research participant, and, as such, is not meant to be a philosophical 'essence', although the empirical factors do get somewhat transcended because of the use of the method of free imaginative variation and consideration of certain possibilities. The determination of the key constituents of the unifying structure of the lived-through empirical phenomenon, thus, refers to the subjective consciousness and conscious acts of the researcher, while aiming for eidetic generalization from an educational perspective. In other words, the attainment of the essential structure based on lived meanings of living subjects (or subjectivities), is grounded on evidentiary givens (precisely as presented in the empirical data) and eidetic intuitions of the researcher.

Methodologically, the search for an 'essence' from an educational perspective, was a process of seeking the structure of the concrete experiences tied to specific contexts, analyzed through the determination of higher-level invariant meanings⁶² that belonged to that structure. While writing the structure, the researcher thus tried as much as possible to depart from the specifics in order to communicate the most invariant meaning of the participants' experience, from an educational perspective. As implied in earlier chapters, the process required a lot of effort and time spent with transforming meaning units, and reading the original raw data, while trying to fulfill the 'emptily' posited signifying act, and seeking for the identification of the most invariant sense - and testing this sense based on several repetitions of the process. In practice, all the transformed meaning units of each participant description, one description at a time, were once again examined, and then again resynthesized and reintegrated, into a consistent description of one unifying structure (presented in chapter 5). The criterion was that all of the transformed meaning units contained in each of the sixteen concrete descriptions were at least implicitly present in the structure.

4.4.5 The fifth step of the analysis

Although the structure of the lived-through (meaningful) experience is the main outcome of the phenomenological descriptive analysis, it is not the final step of the phenomenological reflection. As pointed out by Giorgi (2009), the structural presentation

⁶² Determined by educational (as certain specific disciplinary) interests

of the results hides certain other important features of the findings, although considered as being implicitly present in the structure. Therefore, in the fifth step of the descriptive phenomenological method (in Table 10 below), the structure of the lived-through (meaningful) work-placement assessment experience was considered as a guide for a deeper understanding of the data and the dynamics among the constituents that comprise the structure.

Table 10. The fifth step of the phenomenological analysis highlighted

<i>(Step 1) Reading to get a sense of the whole</i>
<i>(Step 2) Constituting meaning units</i>
<i>(Step 3) Transforming the everyday expressions</i>
<i>(Step 4) The synthesis of transformed meaning units</i>
<i>(Step 5) Determination of variations of constituents</i> The structure of a lived-through work-placement assessment experience was used as a guide for a deeper understanding of the data and the dynamics among the constituents that comprise the structure.

As the result of this step, one table (Table 11) and a diagram (Diagram 1) were formed as presenting an overview of the key-constituents of the general structure (presented in chapter 5), and the empirical variations, and their educational meanings and implications, are then discussed more in detail as follows, in the following chapter (chapter 6).

5 RESULTS

This chapter first presents the structure of the lived-through educationally meaningful assessment experience as experienced by the participants of this study related to work-placements. As such, the results of the phenomenological analyses, are based on the raw data of the transcribed and spoken expressions of the sixteen student participants of aspects of their individual experiences. Hence, the structure as the main outcome of the phenomenological descriptive process, communicates the general, eidetic level meaning of the phenomenon under study, and serves as the basis for the communication of the key-constituents essential for phenomenon. The general structure of the experience is then followed by one table and one diagram, both presenting an overview of the key-constituents, and how the constituents relate to each other. Also the empirical variations among the participants as well as the distinction that was made between educational and empirical variations will be briefly presented, and the variations and their educational meanings will be discussed more in detail in the following chapter (chapter 6).

5.1 THE STRUCTURE AND KEY-CONSTITUENTS

Based upon the phenomenological analysis of all the data, and the search for essence, from an educational perspective, the sixteen participant descriptions of this study were coalesced into one unifying structure. In practice, the data of approximately 130 pages of transcribed text were reduced to one paragraph, at the end of the analysis process. The structure of the lived-through educationally meaningful experience in student assessment related to a work-placement, thus communicates the common meaning of the phenomenon under study given all of the variations of the raw data, and serves as the basis for the communication of the eight key-constituents⁶³ essential for the phenomenon, and for understanding of how the constituents relate to each other.

⁶³ In other words: the eight higher-level eidetic invariant meanings.

The structure of the lived-through educationally meaningful experience in student assessment related to work-placements, in the context of an ongoing higher educational process

One type of an educationally meaningful experience in student assessment related to a work-placement takes place in the context of an ongoing (higher) educational process and occurs in a situation in which a student feels that either a more or less sufficient fulfillment of her/his self-interest has taken place. This occurs when the assessment practice either more or less resonates with the assumptions of the student such that an environment is created in which a student feels that her/his intentions for learning and improvement of self, and acquiring self-knowledge through assessment encounters, are either more or less sufficiently fulfilled, and s/he feels either more or less safe to express her/his genuine needs, feelings and vulnerabilities, in front of other participants (instructor/s and/or peer/s) in the assessment process, and feels that these personal issues are either more or less appropriately privileged by others in the assessment process. The self-interest is acknowledged, when the student becomes aware of a desire and/or a more or less active strive in self for being in a position of acquiring a sufficient understanding about the skills and actions of self, in relation to present requirements and for future self-improvement, through the assessment encounters, and the actions of self and other/s in the assessment process. The desire for obtaining self-knowledge about the skills and actions of self, and whether or not it is sufficiently fulfilled, has a strong personal significance and a motivational character, as a result of which the assessment experience takes on either a more positive or negative educational meaning.

Although the structure of the lived-through meaningful experience in work-placement assessment is the main outcome of the phenomenological descriptive analysis, it is not the final step of the research process. The structural presentation of the results hides certain other important features of the findings, although one may consider them as being implicitly present (see A. Giorgi, 2009, 206-209). Equally important with the discovery of the most invariant meanings (the key-constituents forming the essential structure) of an experience, is to understand what kind of role they play. That is why the eight key-constituents of the lived-through meaningful experience, and how they were present as variations of identity in the sixteen concrete descriptions of the experience, are presented and clarified more in detail, both in a textual and a more figurative format, in the next section (in section 5.2), as follows.

5.2 KEY-CONSTITUENTS AND EMPIRICAL VARIATIONS

In this section, a summary of the findings is presented first, in a table format below (in table 11). Table 11 indicates how each student lived through each of the essential constituents of the structure. It may be interesting to keep in mind, while looking at the key-constituents and the variations of identity, in what way the number linked with the letter “P” refers to each participant as a symbol of her/his study phase (or the year course), namely to the students from year one (P_1, P_2, P_3, P_4), year two (P_5, P_6, P_7, P_8), year three ($P_9, P_{10}, P_{11}, P_{12}$), and year four ($P_{13}, P_{14}, P_{15}, P_{16}$). Additionally, in the table 11, the number linked with the letter “C” refers to each student participant as a symbol of the higher educational institution ($C_1 = UAS_1$ and $C_2 = UAS_2$), at which s/he was studying while participating in this research. To show all the ramifications of the variations of identity, they will be further explored together with references to the original data as follows. However, making comparisons as such, between the different year students, or the students from the different organizations, was not in the preliminary research interest of this study. Nevertheless, they are considered as the background (contextual) characteristics of the lived-through experiences under investigation.

One of the things to be noted, while viewing the constituents, is that the descriptions of the specific instances of student assessment obtained from the participants of this study were only partial descriptions, relating to their recently lived work-placement, and not of the entire higher educational process. Another thing is that the sixteen participants involved in this study were students at two different higher educational organizations (UAS_1 and UAS_2), in Finland. There is also variation in other background characteristics of the student participants, such as the length, content, location, and type of the work-placement setting. Two of the placements (of participants P_{10} and P_{12}) were part of the European student exchange program, called Erasmus, and thus outside of Finland. The rest of the placements were in Finland, but all outside the university campus. Additionally, one of the students (P_2) did her work-placement in a kindergarten setting, under the supervision of early childhood professionals, and three students (P_1, P_3 , and P_4) were working at general hospital (or health care center) wards, along with other health professionals (nurses and nurse assistants), and not so much with the physiotherapist, named as the ‘main

supervisor'. P₁, P₂, P₃, and P₄, were all first year students, and to have the work-placement experience in a basic care setting was part of their course curriculum. The curricular design for the rest of the work-placements, at both schools, had a more specific physiotherapy orientation, and all the other participants thus worked under the supervision of physiotherapy professionals. So the results of this study are clearly limited by these particular factors.

Another limitation is that there were some similarities and some differences in the assessment and grading systems between the two organizations. The grading system applied in UAS₁, in relation to work-placements, during the first and the second year, was based on pass/fail grading and criteria, and later, during the third and fourth year, it was grounded on a 5-step grading scale (1-5, where 1 is the lowest and 5 the highest grade). The grading system applied in UAS₂, through the entire educational process, was based on pass/fail grading and criteria. At both organizations, written assignments (e.g. a learning diary or case report) and specific assessment forms with descriptions of intended and achieved outcomes were used, in relation to work-placements. It was expected at both organizations that the assessment form was filled in, at the beginning (if not beforehand), and at the end of the placement, first by students and then by instructors. At UAS₁, mainly face-to-face and written communications were used between participants for assessment, during the work-placement, while at UAS₂, face-to-face, written, and online communications were in use. At UAS₂, besides the teacher's online comments also online peer commenting was in use. The mode of written assignments applied to work-placements, and how these assignments were or were not assessed, varied at both organizations. Within the context of these background limitations, however, certain constituents stood out in the experiences related by the participants. These are presented below (in Table 11), as follows. The details of the table will be discussed below.

Table 11. The key-constituents of the structure and the empirical variations lived by each participant

Constituents	P₁ 1styr/2weeks/C1	P₂ 1styr/2weeks/C2	P₃ 1styr/2weeks/C1	P₄ 1styr/2weeks/C2
<i>Acknowledgement of self-interest</i>	Desire for obtaining self-knowledge through feedback from others	Desire & active strive for obtaining self-knowledge through own initiatives & feedback from others	Desire for obtaining self-knowledge through feedback from others	Desire for obtaining self-knowledge through feedback from others
<i>Resemblance of assumptions and practice</i>	Mainly clashing assumptions and practice	Assessment practice mainly congruent with assumptions	Mainly clashing assumptions and practice	Mainly clashing assumptions and practice
<i>Sense of shared interest/s</i>	Low due to a lack of joint exploration of goals and actions of self with workplace supervisors	High due to joint exploration of goals and actions of self with instructors & peer	Low due to a lack of joint exploration of goals and actions of self with workplace supervisors	Low due to a lack of joint exploration of goals and actions of self with main supervisor
<i>Reliance on self and/or others</i>	Relying but lacking of supervisor's feedback	Relying on own initiatives, and the supervisors' feedback	Relying but lacking of supervisor's feedback	Relying but lacking of supervisor's feedback
<i>Sense of safety & openness</i>	Low due to instructor and workplace specific circumstances	High due to workplace specific circumstances	Low due to instructor and workplace specific circumstances	Low due to instructor and workplace specific circumstances
<i>Sense of emotional engagement</i>	Acknowledgement of disappointment and frustration	Acknowledgement of general satisfaction	Acknowledgement of disappointment and frustration	Acknowledgement of disappointment and frustration
<i>Sense of enhancement & support</i>	Low due to a lack of relevant feedback from workplace supervisors, awareness of some positive acknowledgement from one supervisor	Moderate due to positive expectations of own initiatives, online collaboration with teacher and peer, awareness of a lack of feedback from workplace supervisors	Low due to a lack of relevant feedback from the main supervisor, awareness of some positive acknowledgement from clients	Low due to a lack of relevant feedback from the supervisor & peer, awareness of the improvement of self through observation of the work of others
<i>Challenge to assumptions & self-interest</i>	Awareness of clashing expectations and practice, needs and interests of self not met, delimited opportunities for learning and self-improvement	Awareness of past experiences and present self-interest, leading to active striving for involvement and responsibility	Awareness of clashing expectations and practice, needs and interests of self not met, delimited opportunities for learning and self-improvement	Awareness of clashing expectations and practice, needs and interests of self not met, delimited opportunities for learning and self-improvement

Table 11. Cont.

Constituents	P₅ 2ndyr/5weeks/C1	P₆ 2ndyr/3weeks/C2	P₇ 2ndyr/5weeks/C1	P₈ 2ndyr/3weeks/C2
<i>Acknowledgement of self-interest</i>	Desire for obtaining self-knowledge through feedback from others	Desire for obtaining self-knowledge through feedback from others	Desire for obtaining self-knowledge through feedback from others	Desire for obtaining self-knowledge through feedback from others
<i>Resemblance of assumptions and practice</i>	Mainly clashing assumptions and practice	Assessment practice congruent with assumptions	Partly clashing assumptions and practice	Partly clashing assumptions and practice
<i>Sense of shared interest/s</i>	Low due to a lack of joint exploration of goals and actions of self with workplace supervisor	High due to joint exploration of goals and actions of self with instructors & peers	Low due to a lack of joint exploration of goals and actions of self with instructors	Low due to a lack of joint exploration of goals and actions of self with workplace supervisors
<i>Reliance on self and/or others</i>	Distrust with the main workplace supervisor	Relying on instructors' feedback & mutual relationship with supervisor and peer	Distrust on self-observations & instructors' feedback	Relying on but lacking of supervisors' feedback
<i>Sense of safety & openness</i>	Low due to instructor and workplace specific circumstances	High due to instructor and workplace specific circumstances	Low due to negative expectations of one's own initiatives, and instructor and workplace specific circumstances	Low due to instructor and workplace specific circumstances
<i>Sense of emotional engagement</i>	Acknowledgement of disappointment and vulnerability	Acknowledgement of general satisfaction	Acknowledgement of disappointment and vulnerability	Acknowledgement of mixed feelings of dissatisfaction and satisfaction
<i>Sense of enhancement & support</i>	Low due to a lack of relevant feedback and approval from the workplace supervisor, awareness of some relevant feedback and encouragement from the teacher	High due to continuous collaboration with instructors & peers, particularly with the main supervisor	Low due to a lack of relevant feedback from instructors, acknowledgement of undeserved positive appraisal of self from instructors	Low due to mismatch between goals and daily expectations, lacking of collaboration with and feedback from workplace supervisors, awareness of positive acknowledgement
<i>Challenge to assumptions & self-interest</i>	Awareness of clashing expectations and practice, conflicts & feelings of vulnerability and distrust, leading to avoidance of confrontation and expression of true feelings	Awareness of the positive respond to self-interest, leading to active striving for involvement and collaboration within a mutual relationship	Awareness of clashing expectations and practice & lack of reliance in self-observations and feedback, leading to avoidance of confrontation and expression of true feelings	Tension from clashing expectations and practice and positive acknowledgement, leading to avoidance of confrontation and expression of authentic feelings

Table 11. cont

Constituents	P₉ 3rdyr/5weeks/C1	P₁₀ 3rdyr/6weeks/C2	P₁₁ 3rdyr/5weeks/C1	P₁₂ 3rdyr/6weeks/C2
<i>Acknowledgement of self-interest</i>	Desire & active strive for obtaining self-knowledge through own initiatives & collaborative actions	Desire & active strive for obtaining self-knowledge through feedback from others	Desire for obtaining self-knowledge through feedback from others	Desire & active strive for obtaining self-knowledge through feedback from others
<i>Resemblance of assumptions and practice</i>	Assessment practice mainly congruent with assumptions	From: clashing assumptions and practice To: better congruency	Mainly clashing assumptions and practice	From: clashing assumptions and practice To: better congruency
<i>Sense of shared interest/s</i>	High due to active initiatives of self and continuous collaboration with all instructors	From: low Through: encouraged initiatives of self To: more timely and accurate feedback	Low due to a lack of joint exploration of goals and actions of self with workplace supervisors	From: low Through: encouraged initiatives of self To: more timely and constructive feedback
<i>Reliance on self and/or others</i>	Relying on own initiatives, mutual relationship with instructors and supervisors' feedback	Relying on own initiatives, and supervisors' feedback	Distrust on workplace supervisors' feedback, reliance on peer's feedback	Relying on own initiatives, and supervisors' feedback
<i>Sense of safety & openness</i>	High due to positive expectations of own initiatives and instructor and workplace specific circumstances	From: Low To: Moderate due to instructor and workplace specific circumstances and own initiatives	Low due to past experience, and to present instructor and workplace specific circumstances	From: Low To: Moderate due to instructor and workplace specific circumstances and own initiatives
<i>Sense of emotional engagement</i>	Acknowledgement of general satisfaction	From: Acknowledgement of dissatisfaction To: feelings of satisfaction	Acknowledgement of disappointment and uncertainty	From: Acknowledgement of dissatisfaction To: feelings of satisfaction
<i>Sense of enhancement & support</i>	High due to mutual relationships and continuous collaboration with instructors	From: lack of relevant feedback Through: own initiatives & support from teacher and peer To: more accurate and timely feedback	Low due to a lack of relevant feedback from the workplace supervisor, awareness of support from the peer-student	From: lack of relevant feedback Through: own initiatives & support from teacher and peer To: more timely and constructive feedback
<i>Challenge to assumptions & self-interest</i>	Awareness of past experiences and present self-interest, leading to active striving for involvement and responsibility within a mutual relationship	Awareness of self-interest and clashing expectations and practice, leading to active striving for involvement and change	Awareness of clashing expectations and practice, feelings of vulnerability and distrust leading to avoidance of expression of authentic feelings	Awareness of self-interest and clashing expectations and practice, leading to active striving for involvement and change

Table 11 cont.

Constituents	P₁₃ 4thyr/5weeks/C1	P₁₄ 4thyr/5weeks/C2	P₁₅ 4thyr/5weeks/C1	P₁₆ 4thyr/5weeks/C2
<i>Acknowledgement of self-interest</i>	Desire for obtaining self-knowledge through feedback from others	Desire & active strive for obtaining self-knowledge through own initiatives & collaborative actions	Desire & active strive for obtaining self-knowledge through own initiatives & collaborative actions	Desire for obtaining self-knowledge through feedback from others
<i>Resemblance of assumptions and practice</i>	Mainly clashing assumptions and practice	Assessment practice mainly congruent with assumptions	Assessment practice mainly congruent with assumptions	Partly clashing assumptions and practice
<i>Sense of shared interest/s</i>	Low due to a lack of joint exploration of goals and actions of self with the main supervisor	High due to active initiatives of self and continuous collaboration with instructors	High due to active initiatives of self and continuous collaboration with instructors	Low due to a lack of joint exploration of goals and actions of self with workplace supervisors
<i>Reliance on self and/or others</i>	Distrust & avoidance of collaboration and conflicts with the main workplace supervisor	Relying on own initiatives, and back-up from supervisors	Relying on own initiatives, and instructors' back-up	Relying on but lacking of supervisors' feedback
<i>Sense of safety & openness</i>	Low due to instructor and workplace specific circumstances & past experience	High due to positive expectations of own initiatives and instructor and workplace specific circumstances	High due to positive expectations of own initiatives and instructor and workplace specific circumstances	Low due to instructor and workplace specific circumstances
<i>Sense of emotional engagement</i>	Acknowledgement of past and present disappointments, and feelings of vulnerability and relief	Acknowledgement of general satisfaction	Acknowledgement of present satisfaction, presence of past negative experiences	Acknowledgement of mixed feelings of dissatisfaction and satisfaction
<i>Sense of enhancement & support</i>	Low due to conflicting relation with the main supervisor, awareness of the support from other supervisors & the teacher	High due to mutual relationship and continuous collaboration with supervisors, lack of peer feedback	High due to mutual relationship and continuous collaboration with instructors	Low due to lack of collaboration with and feedback from workplace supervisors, awareness of positive acknowledgement
<i>Challenge to assumptions & self-interest</i>	Awareness of clashing expectations and practice, vulnerability and distrust, leading to avoidance of confrontation and expression of authentic feelings	Awareness of past experiences and present self-interest, leading to striving for involvement and responsibility within a mutual relationship	Awareness of self-interest, safety and reliance, leading to active involvement within mutual relationship & sharing of past negative experiences	Clashing expectations and practice/positive acknowledgement, leading to avoidance of confrontation and expression of authentic feelings

While the Table 11 above is a summary of the findings with respect to the most invariant meanings (or key-constituents) of the general (eidetic level) structure of the lived-through meaningful experience in work-placement assessment, it also indicates their empirical variations contained in the raw data. With the insights provided by the structure and the key-constituents belonging to that structure, a more detailed clarification of how each of the participants of this study lived through each of the essential constituents is presented next.

Acknowledgement of assumptions and self-interest

Work-placement assessment process in the context of ongoing higher educational process contains an initial self-interest that is based on past experiences and subjective assumptions. All participants of this study entered into the work-placement assessment process with the expectation that the work-placement as a whole would enhance their learning and improvement, and that they through assessment encounters would be obtaining self-knowledge about the skills and actions of self at the workplace. In the case of P₁, P₃, P₄, P₅, P₆, P₇, P₈, P₁₁, P₁₃, and P₁₆, the sense of self-interest mainly came through positive expectations of obtaining self-knowledge through feedback from knowledgeable others (teachers and workplace supervisors). For P₂, P₉, P₁₀, P₁₂, P₁₄, and P₁₅, it came through positive expectations and active striving for obtaining self-knowledge based on the actions of self and others (instructors and/or peers) in the assessment process. However, for P₂, P₁₀, and P₁₂, the emphasis was more in receiving feedback from others (mainly workplace supervisors), and for P₉, P₁₄, and P₁₅, the emphasis was in one's own initiatives and collaborative actions between self and others. As the process proceeds, it takes place in the context of these subjective interests and their more or less sufficient fulfillment, creating possibilities for the actualization of the educationally meaningful (and positively and/or negatively related) experience.

Sense of resemblance between assumptions and actual practice

Whether or not a student could feel a sufficient 'resemblance' between the assumptions of self and the actual assessment practice, seemed to be a critical factor for the student to have either a more positive or negative experience in work-placement. The sense of resemblance between the assumptions of self and the actual assessment practice depends upon several factors that the student perceives

either more or less positively and/or negatively related to her/his assumptions and self-interest. As such, it refers to more than just one characteristic in the concrete experience. If the perception as a whole is mainly positive, as it was in the case of P₂, P₆, P₉, P₁₄, and P₁₅, it refers to all the factors in the concrete experience that the student perceives satisfactory in such a way that s/he feels that the assessment practice as a whole is in line with her/his own expectations. Or, if the perception as a whole is mainly negative, as it was for P₁, P₃, P₄, P₅, P₁₁, and P₁₃, it refers to all the factors in the concrete experience that the student perceives dissatisfactory in such a way that s/he feels that the assessment practice as a whole is not in line (or is clashing) with her/his expectations. In the case of P₇, P₈, P₁₀, P₁₂, and P₁₆, although they all felt that the assessment practice as a whole wasn't in line with their expectations, the sense of resemblance is less straightforward, and interrelated with concurrent other positive characteristics. For P₇, P₈, and P₁₆, who all felt that their abilities were mainly positively acknowledged by their instructors, the negative sense of the resemblance mainly came through the lack of direct, constructive and critical feedback that they desired about their skills and actions. For P₁₀ and P₁₂, the sense of the resemblance came through the perceived change from clashing expectations and practice, at the beginning of the work-placement, to a better congruency of expectations and practice during the work-placement. Nonetheless, the sense of resemblance between the assumptions of self and the actual assessment practice is experienced negatively and/or positively related by all students.

Sense of shared interest/s between self and others

The sense of shared interest/s between self and other/s depends upon the degree to which the student perceives that her/his personal needs and interests are appropriately privileged and responded by others within the work-placement assessment process. As such, it refers to more than just one characteristic in the concrete experience, and is interrelated to the acknowledgment of self-interest at the beginning of the process and to the sense of its fulfillment when the process proceeds. If the student perceived that these personal issues were not appropriately heard and responded by others, as it was in the case of P₁, P₃, P₄, P₅, P₇, P₈, P₁₁, P₁₃, and P₁₆, it mainly came through the lack of feedback and assessment discussion, and joint exploration of the goals and actions of self with instructor/s (mainly the workplace supervisors) at the workplace. Or, if the student perceived that

these personal issues were appropriately privileged and responded by others within the assessment process, as it was in the case of P₂, P₆, P₉, P₁₄, and P₁₅, it mainly came through satisfaction with the course of the collaboration between self and other/s and/or the active initiatives of self and/or other/s, (instructor/s and/or peers) within the assessment process. For P₁₀ and P₁₂, the sense of shared interest/s mainly came through the change from dissatisfaction and lack of feedback and assessment discussion with the workplace supervisor/s, at the beginning of the work-placement, to moderate satisfaction with one's own initiatives and receiving more timely feedback from the supervisors as the process proceeded.

Reliance on self and others within the assessment process

All the sixteen participants of this study indicated the significance of the reliance on self and/or others, in their overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the work-placement, and having a more positive or negative experience in work-placement assessment. The positive or negative sense of the reliance on self and/or others, however, is interrelated with several other factors, and as such refers to more than just one characteristic in the concrete experience, and sometimes makes the situation at the same time both positively and negatively related for the student. In the case of P₅, P₇, P₁₁, and P₁₃, there were feelings of distrust and deliberate avoidance of confrontation with the instructors (workplace supervisor/s and/or teacher/s) but also a considerable desire for receiving positive acknowledgement and/or constructive feedback from the more knowledgeable others (mainly the workplace supervisors). For P₁, P₃, P₄, P₈, and P₁₆, there were strong expectations for receiving relevant feedback from the more knowledgeable other/s (mainly from the workplace supervisors), but also feelings of disappointment and frustration because the lack of it. For P₂, P₆, P₉, P₁₄, and P₁₅, there were strong positive expectations related to one's own initiatives and deliberate actions within the assessment process, but there was also a great deal of reliance on the support from the more knowledgeable others (the workplace supervisors and/or the teachers) and/or the peer student/s. The sense of reliance was less straight-forward, for P₁₀ and P₁₂. It came through the reliance on the feedback from their workplace supervisors, and their disappointment with the lack of it, at the beginning of the work-placement; but it also came through the reliance on one's own initiatives; in sharing

the negative experience with teacher and peer, and, in asking (and receiving) more feedback from the supervisors, when the process proceeded.

Sense of safety and openness within the assessment process

The sense of safety and openness is closely interrelated and equally important with reliance and emotional involvement, refers to several characteristics in the concrete experience. The degree of safety and openness also depends upon the instructor and workplace specific circumstances. In the case of P₆, P₉, P₁₄, and P₁₅, the mainly positive sense of safety and openness came through closeness and availability of the instructors, and for P₂, it came through closeness of home and availability of the teacher and the peer student online. For P₁₀ and P₁₂, who did their work-placement in a foreign country as a part of a student exchange program, the sense of safety and openness came through the availability of the feedback and support from each other (face-to-face), and (online) from the teacher they were more familiar with. In the case of P₁, P₃, and P₄, the more negative sense of safety and openness came through the lack of collaboration and close relationships with the more knowledgeable others (workplace supervisors), and for P₅, P₇, P₈, P₁₁, and P₁₃, and P₁₆, it came through more or less deliberate avoidance of collaboration and/or conflicts and/or fear of consequences.

Emotional engagement in the assessment process

The sense of emotional engagement is equally important and interrelated with the sense of shared interests, reliance on self and others, and safety and openness. The sense of emotional engagement implies how exactly the student 'feels' that s/he is living in that particular life-situation related to her/his subjective interests, the specific circumstances and the other participants in the assessment (and educational) process (as a whole). Emotional engagement is also necessary to the other aspects of the process. The sense of reliance and safety must be felt, and the sense of shared interest, enhancement and support, and resemblance between assumptions and practice, all require emotional (and perceptual level) engagement in order to be 'felt'. Each student's emotional engagement also made acknowledgement and dealing with personal issues as lived and experienced possible. However, the negative sense of the emotional engagement, may also challenge the assumptions

and self-interest by which the student is living in such a way that s/he feels that her/his needs and interests are not appropriately heard and responded within the assessment process, as it was for P₁, P₃, P₄, and s/he may not feel safe to express her/his genuine feelings in front of the other participants in the assessment process, as it was in the case of P₅, P₇, P₁₁, and P₁₃, or the student for one reason or other deliberately avoids open confrontation of the dissatisfying situation, as it was for P₈ and P₁₆. For the actualization of the more positive possibilities one has to feel being supported by others, and that her/his needs and interests are appropriately heard and privileged by others, and feel safe to express her/his genuine experience in front of the others, as it was in the case of P₂, P₆, P₉, P₁₀, P₁₂, P₁₄, and P₁₅.

Sense of enhancement of learning and support from others

The sense of enhancement of learning and improvement and receiving support from others is as critical as the sense of resemblance between assumptions and practice, for the student to have either a more positive or negative experience in work-placement assessment. The sense of enhancement and support depends upon several factors in the concrete experience that the student perceives either more or less satisfying, in relation to her/his assumptions and self-interest. As such, it refers to more than just one characteristic in the concrete experience. If the perception is mainly positive, as it was in the case of P₂, P₆, P₉, P₁₄, and P₁₅, it refers to all the factors in the concrete experience that the student perceives in such a way that it enables her/him to lend her/himself to the educational process in a way that is most enhancing to self. Or, if the perception is mainly negative, as it was for P₁, P₃, P₄, P₅, P₇, P₈, P₁₁, P₁₃, and P₁₆, it refers to all the factors in the concrete experience that the student perceives in such a way that it prevents her/him from lending her/himself to the educational process in a way that is (most) enhancing for self. In the case of P₁₀ and P₁₂, the sense of enhancement and support was mainly negative, but they both perceived a positive change occurring in the assessment practice due to their own active initiatives and receiving support from the teacher and each other. However it is verbalized, the sense of enhancement and support, safety and openness, and emotional engagement, all seem relate to one significant factor: that the student does or does not feel able to express her/his genuine feelings and experiences and/or needs and interests, in front of other participants in the assessment process, and

feels that these personal issues are either more or less appropriately privileged and responded within the work-placement assessment process.

Perceived challenge to the self-interest

In each case, the work-placement assessment process brought challenges to the subjective interests by which the student was living. The challenge spoke directly to the assumptions and self-interest of each student in a meaningful and individually specific way. This challenge to self-interest and its fulfillment necessitated recognition and either more or less deliberate respond, so that the student became aware whether or not her/his personal issues were appropriately heard and responded by other participants in the assessment process, and was then able to choose whether or not to express her/his experience of the challenge to others. In the case of P₁, P₃, and P₄, the sense of the perceived challenge mainly came through clashing expectations and practice, and personal needs and interests not being met in the assessment practice, leaving little room for the enhancement of learning and improvement, or confrontation of the dissatisfying practice. For P₅, P₇, P₁₁, and P₁₃, it came through clashing expectations and practice, and feelings of vulnerability and distrust, and/or conflicting relations with others (mainly instructors), leading to avoidance of confrontation and expression of true feelings or experiences. In the case of P₈ and P₁₆, the sense of challenge also came through clashing expectations and practice, and the needs and interests of self not being fully met, but there was also a considerable awareness of the positive acknowledgement received from more knowledgeable other, leading to a more or less deliberate avoidance of confrontation and expression of true feelings. In the case of P₂, P₆, P₉, P₁₀, P₁₂, P₁₄, and P₁₅, the sense of challenge was strongly related to acknowledgement of self-interest and the respond to self-interest in the present or in the past, leading to active striving of the student for involvement and enhancement in fulfillment of the self-interest.

5.3 EDUCATIONAL AND EMPIRICAL VARIATIONS

One distinction that was made while exploring the empirical variations and their educational implications was that between the educational and empirical variations. That is, because some of the meanings varied both at the empirical and at the

educational level. Hence, all of the key-constituents presented above were present in all sixteen participant descriptions, and as such stand as educational constituents, but the mode of their presence sometimes varied between participants: that is, they were dynamically different. For example, the constituent ‘acknowledgement of self-interest’ was equally critical for the actualization of the educationally meaningful experience for each participant, but it had varying degrees of educational implications. Hence, what exactly gave each student the sense of acknowledgement of self-interest, varied empirically, but there was some variation in the educational meaning of those empirical differences as well. In the case of P₁, P₃, P₄, P₅, P₆, P₇, P₈, P₁₁, P₁₃, and P₁₆, the sense of self-interest mainly came through positive expectations of receiving relevant feedback from knowledgeable others (teachers and workplace supervisors), and for P₂, P₉, P₁₀, P₁₂, P₁₄, and P₁₅, it mainly came through positive expectations and active striving for obtaining self-knowledge based on the actions of self and others (instructors and/or peers) in the assessment process. However, for P₂, P₁₀, and P₁₂, the emphasis was in receiving feedback from others, and for P₉, P₁₄, and P₁₅, the emphasis was in one’s own initiatives and collaborative actions between self and others. So, the constituent is present in all cases but in a dynamically different meaning; there is an educationally significant difference between ‘receiving’ and ‘action’, the former implying a passive role and the latter suggesting an active role of the student. So, the educational implications of the empirical variations may also vary, and the constituents thus may vary at the educational level. These variations among participants in terms of their educational meanings and implications will be discussed more in detail in the discussion section (in Chapter 6).

5.4 MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCE WITHIN THE CONTEXT

The educationally meaningful experience in work-placement assessment does not stand alone; it stands out against the overall experience of a longer process, the ongoing higher educational process, including student assessment. Within Husserlian phenomenology, it means that it is a dependent phenomenon; it refers to another, more basic event. Besides, the aspects as lived are not as distinct as they

might appear in the table 11 above. For example, the sense of emotional engagement has a lot to do with the sense of safety and openness of the assessment environment, and the sense of safety and openness of the environment is closely connected to reliance in self and others, which in turn is related to the sense of enhancement and support as well as the sense of shared interest/s. Thus, the relationships among constituents are as important as the constituents themselves, and if any of them were to be taken away the structure of the lived-through educationally meaningful experience would collapse. That is why the characteristics of each constituent have to be understood always in relation to the other co-present constituents and their characteristics.

An examination of the diagram presented below shows the interrelatedness among the constituents of the lived-through educationally meaningful experience. Beneath the diagram is the experiential state with which the student enters the work-placement and assessment process, with her/his past experiences, and subjective assumptions and interests. The interactions with self, others, and the world, and all aspects of the work-placement and the assessment process, or the ongoing higher educational process in general, thus take place in the context of these contingent experiences, assumptions and interests. Within the assessment process then the student must acknowledge her/his self-interest to becoming aware of the challenge for its fulfillment, or the sense of resemblance between the assumptions of self and the actual assessment practice. It is equally important for the acknowledgement of the sense of enhancement of learning and support from others. Now, all of these constituents must be present, if an educationally meaningful experience based on the apprehension of either more or less sufficient fulfillment of the self-interest is to take place, but they do not guarantee it. Hence, the possibility of a meaningful experience in work-placement assessment is awakened, but more is required. For example, all of these meanings must be 'felt' (by being 'emotionally engaged') in order to become aware of their sense. Nor are the constituents and their relationships always equally present or equally apprehended by the experience, and they don't follow a concrete or definable order.

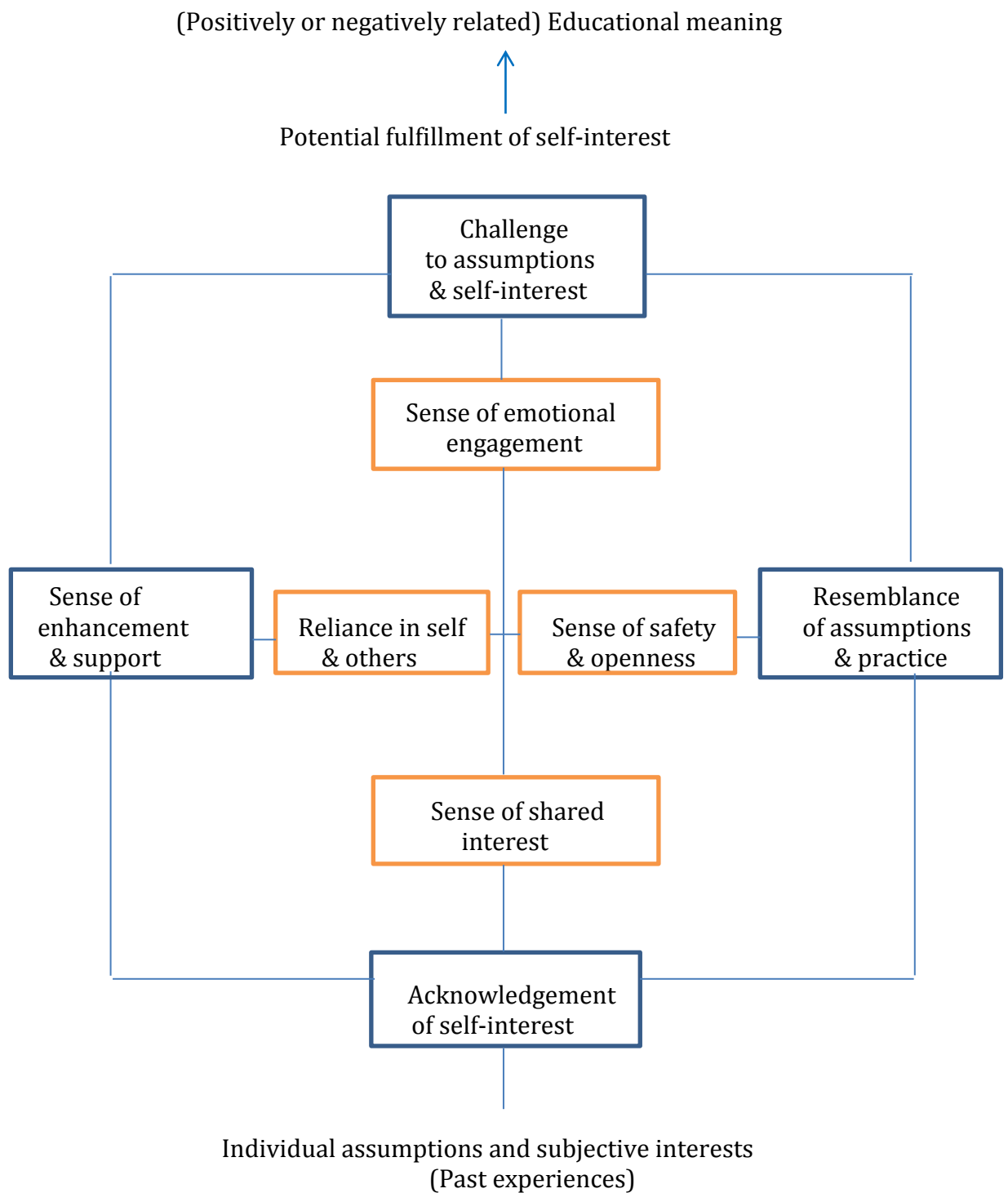


Diagram 1. Interrelated constituents in the context of ongoing higher educational process containing the educationally meaningful work-placement assessment experience

The relationships among the constituents are not cause-effect relationships, and therefore should be understood along the lines of Husserl's⁶⁴ "founding-founded" relationship. The constituents thus have to be understood as non-independent parts of a whole that needs other parts⁶⁵ in order for the phenomenon to be experienced. What is also required is in the middle of the diagram above. Once the awareness of self-interest is awakened in the student other necessary constituents become possible. Thus, acknowledgement of the self-interest in that sense can be seen as the most "foundational" key-constituent in the structure. The other constituents are: sense of shared interest/s between self and others, reliance in self and others within the assessment process, safety and openness of the assessment environment/process, and emotional engagement of self. Thus, at some point, the student needs to become attuned to her/his life-experience in that situation, that is, how exactly s/he is living and experiencing the situation in relation to self, the specific circumstances, and other participants in the assessment process (teacher/s, workplace supervisor/s, peer/s), and how satisfactory and/or dissatisfactory s/he exactly feels that situation.

Perhaps it is her/his dissatisfaction with the lack of feedback that s/he desires from others that s/he may or may not want to confront, or perhaps s/he becomes aware of her/his own vulnerability, or just how s/he is valuing the positive acknowledgement attained from knowledgeable other/s (for example, from the workplace supervisor/s), although feeling disappointed with the situation otherwise. This sense of emotional engagement then becomes a challenge to the assumptions and self-interest by which the student is living. This is a highly significant moment for the student. The reliance on self and others as the assessors of self, and the sense of safety and openness of the assessment environment, as well as the sense of shared interest/s with other participants in the assessment process, are all critical here. If the student feels that her/his subjective needs and interests are not appropriately privileged (or signified) by others, s/he may not feel safe enough to express her/his genuine feelings and vulnerabilities in front of the others, and, then the potential fulfillment of the self-interest is challenged, and the negative meaning of work-placement assessment has a good chance of being actualized. But if s/he feels that her/his subjective needs and interests are appropriately privileged (or signified)

⁶⁴ See Husserl's founding-founded relationship in *Logical Investigations*, 1970, 435-448.

⁶⁵ Moments for Husserl.

by others, and, when needed, s/he feels safe to openly express her/his genuine feelings and vulnerabilities in front of the others, then the more positively meaningful work-placement assessment experience has a good chance of being actualized.

Again, there is no guarantee either way. For the actualization of the more positive or negative possibilities some, more or less deliberate or conscious acts on the part of the student are still needed. If, however, the positive possibilities have been acknowledged and fully lived through, then one could say that a positively meaningful experience has taken place, and if the negative possibilities have been acknowledged and fully lived through, one could say that a negatively meaningful experience has occurred. Or, one could say that, a 'good' or 'bad' experience, educationally speaking, has occurred. When it is 'good', the student has acknowledged a sufficient fulfillment of the self-interest, and thus acquired a sufficient understanding about her/his skills and actions (relevant with the self-interest), and feels that s/he is able to lend to the assessment process in a way s/he feels most enhancing for her/himself, and the sense of her/his experience as a whole, is mainly positive. When it is 'bad', the student has acknowledged a less sufficient fulfillment of the self-interest, and, is lacking of sufficient understanding of her/his skills and actions (relevant with the self-interest), and feels that s/he is not able to lend to the assessment process in a way s/he feels would be most enhancing for her/himself, and the sense of her/his experience as a whole, is mainly negative. Moreover, one could say that there is a second order of interrelated characteristics (or moments) that also have to be satisfied for an educationally and more positively or negatively meaningful work-placement assessment experience to take place. Again, although all of these characteristics have to be present, they do not 'cause' it. Rather, they awaken the student's experiential flow sufficiently so that the sense of the educational significance announces itself in a potentially meaningful and more positive or negative ('good' or 'bad') way.

Since the structure and the key-constituents both provide a deeper insight into the unifying dynamics taking place across varied experiences, and as such serve as the basis of essential communication, the purpose of the next chapter, is to return to the raw data and make better sense of all of the ramifications of the variations contained therein. Yet the motive of the researcher is still to stay within the evidence drawn from the data. The claim that is made for the structure, attained in this study, is that it is general in the sense that the findings transcend the situation in

which they were obtained. That is because the structure as a result of the adopted phenomenological, eidetic and scientific reduction, and the use of the method of imaginative variation based on conscious acts by the researcher, is dependent upon the context specific horizontal factors and determined by the educational interests. That is why no universal epistemological claims are made based on the results. An educational perspective here implies, nevertheless, that the lived-through meanings of work-placement assessment are based on individuals, but because of the use of imaginative variation and consideration of certain possibilities get expressed eidetically from an educational perspective, and thus are generalizations of an 'eidetic type'. And because they are general, the structure, in principle, is applicable to more individuals than the persons upon which they were based. Since the structure of the lived-through experience under examination as such is pregnant⁶⁶ with implications, and both the implications and possibilities contribute to the clarification of meaning in phenomenology, the experiential variations of the most invariant meanings of the above mentioned structure as well as their educational implications are also discussed as follows.

⁶⁶ The sense of the term highlights the structure as a synthesis of the experiential variations and their disciplinary (in this case, educational) implications (c.f. A. Giorgi, 2009, 199-204).

6 DISCUSSION

The reason this study was undertaken is to try to determine experientially, in what ways student assessment, connected to higher education and work-placements, is meaningful to undergraduate students, and to find out if something educationally significant (or, 'good' or 'bad') for the student, could come from assessment when connected to a work-placement. To state that assessment is educationally significant, however, can mean different things, and the aim was not to predetermine its meaning. That is why the participants of this study were allowed to choose freely, what aspects of the lived-through experience under study they wanted to express, without any limits other than the context of the experience or a focus on certain characteristics of the educational experience. Since no attempt was made to limit the study to a certain stage of the undergraduate program either, the results of this study have to be seen in the light of undergraduate students who are in different phases of their (higher) educational programs, and, some less than others familiar with student assessment, as applied to higher educational programs and work-placements. Besides, the descriptions obtained from the student participants, were only partial descriptions, related to a recently lived work-placement period, and not of the entire educational process. Within the context of these limitations, certain constituents stood out in the participant descriptions of this study, and some characteristics more positively or negatively related in the experience than others.

In this study, educational meanings of assessment are spoken about, instead of the impact or effectiveness assessment. The idea of the impact and effectiveness of the higher educational processes, often goes along with the idea of quality control and management, and pre-existing consensus of the rules and regulations, and the objective and measurable parameters to be followed, which often are primarily in service of the purpose and policy of the higher educational institution itself, and the focus on the assessment of learning, or the development of the capability of the student, often comes secondary (see, e.g. Boud, 2007, E. Poikela, 2012). However, it can easily be argued that such pre-existing and measurable parameters may not be the most meaningful criterion of the quality of the educational processes, including assessment, particularly when considered how the process is experienced by those who are living through it, although such a criterion

cannot be dismissed either. Student assessment in higher education, however, is a highly complex phenomenon, involving a lot of different but related factors.

Since there probably is a limit to the extent which all of the implications of student assessment can be made explicit, and some aspects of assessment may only be understood through personal and shared experiences, this study aimed for a more thorough understanding and new insights to student assessment related to work-placements, as lived and experienced by those who are living at the heart of it, namely the students. It also gives an insight whether or not something 'positive' or 'negative' (or 'good' or 'bad') as experienced by students, from an educational perspective, could come from assessment in relation to work-placements, given the diverse claims of the implications of student assessment and work-placements. The data of this study confirmed that students experience such positive and/or negative (or, 'good' or 'bad') meanings. What follows next, is a detailed discussion of the nature of an educationally meaningful work-placement assessment experience as experienced by undergraduate physiotherapy students, based on elaboration of the results of this study. While exploring more in detail the key-constituents of the lived-through work-placement assessment experience, and how they were present as variations of identity in the sixteen concrete descriptions of the experience, a distinction was made between educational and empirical variations. These empirical variations among the constituents in terms of their educational meanings and implications, and how the constituents relate to each other by meaningful implication, will be discussed next.

6.1 THE NATURE OF THE LIVED-THROUGH MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCE

The lived-through meaningful experience in work-placement assessment is a chain of events meaningfully linked to one another which stands out against the overall experience of a longer (ongoing higher educational) process and carries a great deal of personal significance to the student. It is not a chain of clear moments or certain order lived out in real time as much as a chain of events that string together by their meaningful relationship, such that a sense of an educational meaning, or, which can be called a positively and/or negatively related experience, is discernible. What makes the chain of events to stand out as a meaningful experience, educationally

speaking, is the recognition that through these events either a more or less sufficient fulfillment of prior self-interest takes place within the student, and s/he feels that s/he is or is not able to lend her/himself to the educational process in a way that s/he perceives is most enhancing for self. The lived-through meaningful experience in work-placement assessment consists of particular and concrete events or “parts” (or moments by Husserl) lived in the context of the longer process, which may be quite ambiguous while being lived through. There is, nevertheless, a distinguishable chain of events that are meaningfully linked to each other, and the lived-through (meaningful) chain of events, and the constituents of that chain of events that became discernible through the analysis of this study follow a certain pattern that is consistent among all sixteen students. The pattern is based upon experienced meanings and the constituents have been presented in their essential and interrelated structure for this type of a lived-through meaningful experience, both in the textual and figurative (diagrammatic) format. The discussion follows this structure (as expressed in Tables 13 and 14), while also highlighting the ways in which the different constituents are interrelated and, flow, into one another.

6.1.1 Acknowledgement of self-interest

In order for the educationally meaningful experience in work-placement assessment to take place, there has to be an initial self-interest upon the educational process that is based on prior experience and subjective assumptions. Students commonly enter into their work-placement with positive expectations of the learning and improvement of self, and assume that these skills will be monitored during the work-placement. As the process proceeds, it takes place in the context of these personal assumptions and interests, and past experiences.

In the case of P₂, P₆, P₉, P₁₄, and P₁₅, there was a great deal of positive expectations related to the enhancement of learning and improvement of self, and obtaining self-knowledge through the actions of self and others. In the case of P₂, there was a clear expectation based on prior experience about the necessity of the active role of self, in the enhancement of the process, and in receiving relevant feedback from others about the skills and actions of self. P₉, P₁₄ and P₁₅, all based on their prior experience had a great deal of positive expectations related to their own

deliberate initiatives in the assessment process, and in the enhancement of learning and improvement of self, and related to collaborative actions with other participants in the assessment process (instructors and/or peers). P₆ more indirectly implied the positive expectations related to the creation of concrete and achievable learning goals, and to supervisors' attention to her deeds and interests and giving relevant feedback about her skills and actions at the workplace. In the case of P₁₀ and P₁₂, there was an initial expectation of receiving relevant feedback about the skills and actions of self from the workplace supervisors, and when the process proceeded it extended to positive expectations of the active role and initiatives of self in asking and receiving more relevant feedback from the supervisors. Although the words are different, they all emphasized the actions of self and others related to their own positive expectations, but from an educational perspective the actions of self and others signified acknowledgement of self-interest; the desire and active striving for learning and improvement and obtaining self-knowledge based on the actions of self and others in the assessment process.

In the case of P₁, P₃, P₄, P₅, P₇, P₈, P₁₀, P₁₁, P₁₂, P₁₃, and P₁₆, there was a considerable amount of positive expectations stated by the all, related to learning and improvement of self during the work-placement, and the emphasis being in receiving relevant feedback about the skills and actions of self at the workplace from the knowledgeable others (mainly workplace supervisors). For P₁, P₃, and P₄, there was an explicit expectation of close collaboration and joint exploration of the goals and actions of self with the workplace supervisor/s, receiving direct and accurate feedback about the skills and actions of self at the workplace, and/or the skills and actions being monitored and assessed by the supervisors. P₅ and P₁₃ both emphasized the desire for receiving relevant feedback and positive acknowledgement of their skills and actions from teacher and the workplace supervisor. P₈ and P₁₆ both explicitly addressed the desire for receiving continuous and direct feedback from the workplace supervisors about their skills and actions during the work-placement, and not only at the end of it. Hence, from an educational perspective, they emphasized closeness and continuum, relevance and accuracy, and different sources of feedback in their comments, which all signified variations of self-interest, the desire in self for acquiring self-knowledge by the means of feedback from the knowledgeable others. Thus, all sixteen students acknowledged their self-interest that allowed them to become attuned to their life-experience, but there was

some variation in its educational meaning. Or, in other word, the constituent was present in all cases but in a dynamically different meaning; there is an educationally significant difference between 'receiving' and 'action', the former implying a passive role and the latter suggesting an active role of the student. Because the acknowledgement of self-interest is so fundamental for the awakening and sense of the other necessary constituents, it will be further elaborated in the discussion as it relates to the context of the various constituents.

6.1.2 The sense of resemblance between assumptions and practice

Whether or not a student could feel a sufficient 'resemblance' between the assumptions of self and the actual assessment practice, was a critical condition for the student to have either a more positive or negative experience in work-placement assessment. As such, it refers to more than just one characteristic in the concrete experience and includes biases. If the perception is positive, it refers to all the factors in the concrete experience that the student perceives satisfying in such a way that s/he feels that the assessment practice as a whole is in line with her/his own assumptions. Or, if the perception as a whole is negative, it refers to all the factors in the concrete experience that the student perceives dissatisfying in such a way that s/he feels that the assessment practice as a whole is not in line (or is clashing) with her/his own assumptions.

P₂, P₆, P₉, P₁₄, and P₁₅, all more or less directly implied their general satisfaction with the process, and addressed significance of the actions of self and/or other/s. For P₂ the sense of the quality of resemblance between assumptions and practice was partly due to her positive expectations of the active role and initiatives of self, in introducing the aim and goals of the work-placement for the workplace supervisors, and in asking and receiving feedback about her skills and actions. Another part was that she was able to do her work-placement near home, and regardless of the distance was able to communicate with the teacher and peers online. Although P₂ felt that she, at the end of the work-placement, was lacking of accurate feedback about her skills and actions, and things that she needed to improve, she explicitly acknowledged that she could have asked feedback more actively herself, and that she needed improvement in that too; the implication being

that P₂, in lending her to the educational process in a way that she believed was most enhancing for herself, was biased with her assumptions of the positive impact of her own active and responsible role, and did not assume as much investment and responsibility from others, nor feel too disappointed with the course of the actions of others, although desiring for more relevant feedback from others.

For P₆, the sense of the quality of resemblance came through satisfaction with the actions of the main workplace supervisor, in paying attention to P₆'s needs and interests and giving continuous feedback about her skills and actions. Even though the other supervisor did not pay similar attention or give much feedback to her, P₆ felt that because of the amount of investment of the main supervisor on student supervision and feedback, she was engaged in an ongoing assessment discussion and joint exploration of her goals and actions. P₆ also addressed her satisfaction with online and face-to-face collaboration with teacher and peers, in receiving feedback and assurance of being on-track. Yet, P₆ said that, at the end of the work-placement, that she didn't have a sufficient understanding of the level of her skills and actions; the implication being that P₆, in lending her to the educational process in a way that she believed was most enhancing for herself, was biased with her assumptions of the positive impact of receiving feedback from others, and assumed that her desire for a better understanding about the level of her skills and actions would be fulfilled through the feedback from others.

In the case of P₉, P₁₄, and P₁₅, the sense of the quality of resemblance between assumptions and practice had everything to do with their satisfaction with the actions of self and others (mainly the instructors) within the process. P₉ was generally satisfied with her own active role, in being able to choose the location and focus of the work-placement, and the written assignment related to the work-placement according to her own interests, and deliberately asking the workplace supervisors to give her direct feedback about her skills and actions at the workplace. P₉ also highlighted her satisfaction with the supervisors' investment to her needs and expectations, and giving plenty of feedback throughout the process. P₁₄ too was generally satisfied with her own active role and initiatives, in introducing her goals and interests, and the use of the assessment form for the workplace supervisors, and deliberately recording her daily actions with patients. Also P₁₄ emphasized her satisfaction with the supervisors' investment to her needs and learning goals, and their availability in the advancement of her understanding in that special area that

was interested in. Besides addressing the positive impact of her own active role, in choosing the work-placement and deciding the learning goals according to her own interests, P₁₅ also highlighted the significance of the actions of the teacher and the workplace supervisor, in paying attention to her needs and interests, and in creating a safe environment and mutual atmosphere, where P₁₅ felt herself being valued. Hence, although in different words, they all besides their satisfaction emphasized the significance of the active role and engagement of self and others, but the satisfaction and the engagement signified the sense of resemblance between assumptions and practice, and the process and the actions of self and others being in line with the sense of their own assumptions and self-interest.

P₁, P₃, P₄, P₅, P₇, P₈, P₁₁, P₁₃, and P₁₆, on the other hand, all implied their general disappointment with the process as a whole. P₁, P₃, and P₄, all explicitly announced that the assessment practice was clashing with their own expectation. P₁ and P₃ both emphasized their disappointment with the lack of feedback assessment discussion, and collaboration with the workplace supervisors in general, and felt that there was no proper assessment during the process. P₄ besides her disappointment with the lack of feedback and collaboration with the workplace supervisor strongly addressed her dissatisfaction with the low investment of others (supervisor and peer) in the process. Also P₅ and P₁₃, besides the lack of relevant feedback, addressed their disappointment with the lack of positive acknowledgement of their skills and actions from the main workplace supervisor. P₁₁ simply said that the workplace supervisor did not seem to understand her position as a student, or her needs for receiving feedback about her skills and actions. Hence, although verbalizing it differently, they all emphasized disappointment and lack in their comments, but the disappointment and lack signified the sense of the quality of the resemblance between assumptions and practice, and the process and the actions of the instructors, clashing with the sense of their own assumptions and self-interest.

The sense of disappointment, for P₇, P₈, P₁₀, P₁₂, and P₁₆, is less straightforward, and interrelated with concurrent other, positive factors. P₇, P₈ and P₁₆, all explicitly announced that although their abilities were positively acknowledged by their instructors, they were lacking of constructive and direct feedback about their skills and actions, in relation to current requirements and for further improvement of self. P₁₀ and P₁₂, both explicitly acknowledged that their expectations were not met at the beginning of the work-placement, but a change for better occurred later in the

process related to their own actions, in asking and receiving more feedback about the course of their actions from the supervisors. Hence, all of the phenomena, although verbalized differently, were still varieties of the sense of resemblance between assumptions and practice. The specific sense of the quality of resemblance between the assumptions and the actualized assessment practice varied for students depending upon what aspect of the resemblance were important for her/him as well as how each student experienced the process as a whole. The educational level implication is that the specific sense may awaken the student's experiential flow sufficiently so that acknowledgement of the relationship between the assumptions of self and the actual assessment practice announces itself in a potentially meaningful (and positively and/or negatively related) way. Because the sense of the quality of the resemblance is critical to the meaning of the assessment experience as a whole, and whether or not it takes a more positively or negatively related meaning, it will also be further elaborated in the discussion as it relates to the context of the various constituents.

6.1.3 Sense of shared interest

The sense of shared interest/s between self and other/s depends upon the nature and the awareness of the student of her/his prior experiences and expectations, and the degree to which the student perceives that her/his personal needs and interests are appropriately heard and responded by others within the work-placement assessment process. Hence, it too refers to more than just one characteristic in the concrete experience, and is strongly interrelated to acknowledgement of self-interest, and the sense of its fulfillment. At some point, the student thus needs to become attuned to her/his life-experience in that specific situation, and how exactly s/he is living and experiencing the situation in relation to the other participants (the teacher/s, the workplace supervisor/s, the peer/s) within the assessment process. As the process proceeds, this awareness creates possibilities for the awakening of the student's experiential flow sufficiently so that s/he becomes aware of the sense of the fulfillment of her/his subjective interests, and the acts of self and others, and how satisfactory or dissatisfactory s/he exactly feels that situation, and may become a challenge to the assumptions and self-interest.

For P₂, P₆, P₉, P₁₀, P₁₂, P₁₄, and P₁₅, the importance of shared interest between self and others came through satisfaction with the active role and investment of self and/or others within the assessment process. P₂, P₉, P₁₀, P₁₂, and P₁₄, all emphasized their own active role and responsibility; for P₂ it showed in explaining the aim and goals of the work-placement for the workplace supervisors, for P₉, P₁₀, and P₁₂, it was a matter of asking the workplace supervisors to give direct feedback about their actions at the workplace, and for P₁₄, it came through active initiatives in introducing her the aim and goal of the work-placement and the use of the assessment form for the workplace supervisors, and through the collaborative actions of self and the supervisors throughout the process. Besides their own initiatives, P₁₄ and P₉ also emphasized the efforts of the workplace supervisors, in continuously monitoring their needs and expectations during the work-placement. P₆ and P₁₅ both emphasized the supervisors' investment on the continuous exploration of the goals and actions during the process. For P₁₀, and P₁₂, the investment of the workplace supervisor was dissatisfactory at the beginning of the work-placement and then became more satisfactory when the process proceeded. Thus, although verbalizing it differently, they all in their comments emphasized engagement and collaboration, and/or creation of mutual relationships between self and others, which clearly signified their concern with the sense of shared interest/s between self and others, and the desire for acquiring self-knowledge through assessment encounters and these mutual relationships.

P₁, P₃, P₄, P₅, P₇, P₈, P₁₁, P₁₃, and P₁₆, all implied that their needs and interests were not shared or appropriately privileged by their instructors. They all explicitly stated that besides lacking of relevant feedback, they were lacking of joint exploration of their goals and actions interests with the workplace supervisors. However, P₅ and P₁₃ both announced that they more or less deliberately avoided confrontation and collaboration with the main supervisor, since they both had conflicting relationships with their supervisors. Besides, they both had past negative experiences of similar situations, while expressing their negative experiences in front of others. P₁₃ also said that she perceived the relations at the workplace hierarchical, and that the actions of the main supervisor were hardly ever questioned by other physiotherapists, including student assessment. P₅ simply stated that she deliberately avoided open confrontation with the supervisor because of fearing the consequences; the implication being that with respect to P₅ and P₁₃'s vulnerable

positions, and their deliberate avoidance of collaboration and conflicts, there was not much potential for the fulfillment of their own expectations, or shared interests to occur between them and their supervisors. Also P₁₁ implied to her deliberate avoidance of collaboration and confrontation with workplace supervisor, although more indirectly. She explicitly stated that the supervisor did not understand her position as a student or her needs for receiving feedback about her skills and actions, and thus felt difficult to show her uncertainty in front of the supervisor who she didn't trust. Also P₈ and P₁₆, less directly implied to their deliberate avoidance of showing their genuine feelings at the workplace, although being aware of their own dissatisfaction. They both, however, implied the positive acknowledgement by their supervisors otherwise. P₇'s feelings of disappointment were a direct concern with the lack of shared interest; besides lacking of relevant feedback about her skills and actions, she felt that she was too positively appraised, and not required enough by her instructors. P₇ also felt that the instructors emphasized too much self-assessment, which P₇ found frustrating and ineffective, and desired for more accurate information. These were her personal interests which P₇ also did not share with the instructors. In the case of P₁, P₃, and P₄, there also weren't a lot of opportunities for the creation of shared interests between the students and the workplace supervisors, but it was due to other reasons. P₁, P₃ and P₄ all announced that they desired for joint collaboration and assessment discussion with the workplace supervisor, and addressed their disappointment due to its lack. So, although the words of P₁, P₃, P₄, P₅, P₈, P₁₁, P₁₃, and P₁₆, are different, they all emphasized the lack of shared interest, but also all more or less deliberately avoided confrontation with the dissatisfying situation. Thus, all participants in their comments clearly signified their concern with the sense of shared interest/s between self and others, so the constituent is present in all cases, but in dynamically different meaning, that is individually determined and related with instructor and workplace specific circumstances.

6.1.4 Reliance on self and others

All the sixteen participants of this study indicated the significance of the reliance in self and/or others within the assessment process, in their overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and for the student to have either a more positive or negative

experience in assessment related to a work-placement. The positive or negative sense of the reliance on self and/or others, however, is interrelated with several other factors, and as such refers to more than just one characteristic in the concrete experience, and sometimes makes the situation at the same time positively and negatively related, for the student. In the case of P₅, P₇, P₁₁, and P₁₃, there was distrust and deliberate avoidance of confrontation with the instructors (workplace supervisor/s and/or teacher/s) but a considerable desire for receiving feedback from the more knowledgeable others (mainly the workplace supervisors) as well. For P₁, P₃, P₄, P₈, and P₁₆, there was a strong reliance and desire for receiving feedback from the more knowledgeable other/s (mainly from the workplace supervisors), and feeling betrayed and/or frustrated, because the lack of it. For P₂, P₆, P₉, P₁₀, P₁₂, P₁₄, and P₁₅, there was both a strong reliance on one's own initiatives and deliberate actions within the assessment of self, but there was also a great deal of reliance on the feedback and "back-up" received from the more knowledgeable others (the workplace supervisors and/or the teachers) and the "attention" and assurance of being "on-track" received from peer students.

This constituent stood out strongly with all participants, although it is often indirect and is significantly related to the students' overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the work-placement assessment process. P₁, P₃, and P₄, for example, although not saying it so directly, all seemed to be feeling betrayed (by their workplace supervisor/s). P₁ stated that being told that "everything went alright" by the workplace supervisor was not "relevant feedback", and writing about her own thoughts and expectations before and after the work-placement was not "proper assessment" to her. P₃ declared that since his skills and actions or his capability to meet the workplace requirements were not "properly assessed" by the main workplace supervisors, he felt that no "real" assessment existed during the work-placement. P₄ announced that the "low investment" of the workplace supervisor on student feedback and assessment, or collaboration with P₄ in general, lowered her opportunities for learning and self-improvement. Thus, although in different words, they clearly are all expressions of clashing expectations and practice, and a lack of fulfillment of self-interest, but they are also expressions of the reliance of the student on receiving feedback, and being assessed by the more knowledgeable others (the workplace supervisors), from who they expected considerable attention and assurance to their own needs and expectations. However, they all had some positive

experiences as well. P₁ said that being told by one of the supervisors that she seemed to know what to do with patients, gave her some assurance of “being on-track”. P₃ implied that the only direct feedback he received on his actions during the work-placement was the positive feedback from his clients about his manual skills, that he felt “comforting”. P₄ stated that by reflecting the actions of self and observing the work of others, she became aware of her capability to utilize her observations later, in similar situations. Nonetheless, although there is personal variation and how they verbalized the experience, the educational meaning of the experience is still the same: they are all expressions of reliance on acquiring information through feedback from or observing the more knowledgeable other/s (workplace supervisors) for one’s own assurance.

P₂, P₆, P₉, P₁₀, P₁₂, P₁₄, and P₁₅, who related many ways in which their experience was positive, all more or less explicitly implied to their reliance on their own initiatives and the actions of others in the assessment process, although they verbalized it differently. It was P₂ who mainly emphasized the reliance on her own efforts, by stating that besides explaining the aim and goals of the placement for the workplace supervisors, she could have more actively asked feedback about her skills and actions during the work-placement, and needed further improvement in that too. Otherwise, P₂ merely implied to her satisfaction with the collaboration with instructors, using the online facilities for communication with teacher and peers, and with being able to accomplish the first work-placement near home. P₁₄ too emphasized her own active input, and stated that she based on her past experience knew that taking an active and leading role of self was necessary for a successful work-placement experience. P₁₄ also highlighted the significance of the supervisors’ “availability” and “back-up”, and their willingness to pay attention to her needs and interests during the work-placement. P₁₄ stated that the supervisors gave her good hints in creating learning goals, and were always available for discussions and for sharing their knowledge and expertise in the special area that she was interested in; the implication being that besides the reliance in self, she also relied on the “back-up” and support from the more knowledgeable other/s (the expert supervisors). P₁₄ also said that based on her past experiences of remote placements she did not expect much respond from the teacher, and was prepared to introduce the use of the assessment form to the workplace supervisors. P₉ almost similarly acknowledged the positive impact and importance of her own initiatives, and her deliberate actions in

self-assessment, and relied on the feedback and guidance she received from the expert supervisors. She also emphasized the impact of the teacher's remarks in changing her original (the second best) grade (suggested by the supervisors) to the highest, at the final assessment discussion.

P₁₅, who too highlighted the positive impact of her own initiatives, and the close collaboration with her workplace supervisor, also related many ways in which she experienced the roles of the instructors' positively. Besides her reliance on the teacher's "back-up" during the work-placement, and feeling that she was "valued" as a colleague by her workplace supervisors, P₁₅ acknowledged the significance of the teacher's presence in the creation of a safe atmosphere, at the final assessment discussion. However, P₁₅ stated that she valued her own ability for self-assessment more than the (highest) grade she received at the end of the work-placement. P₁₄ thus speaks about "availability" and "back-up" and "taking lead", P₁₅ about "valuing" and "safe atmosphere", and but they all signify reliance (in self and/or others). Also P₁₀ and P₁₂, although, in slightly different words, both acknowledged the significance of their own initiatives and reliance on the supervisors' feedback; P₁₂ by emphasizing the significance of being able to share her primarily negative experience with the teacher and peer, and receiving encouragement for the supervisor and the peer for confronting the dissatisfying situation; and P₁₀ by addressing her own capability to recognize where she needed to ask help or advice from the supervisors, and the supervisor's responsibility to give feedback to students also without asking for it. It was P₆ who also did not say it so explicitly, but the context makes it clear, that she had a complete reliance on the main workplace supervisor, and on the feedback she received from the teacher related to her learning goals. However, it didn't mean that the main supervisor never challenged P₆ but it occurred in mutual understanding. Thus, although the words are different, these are all expressions of the reliance on the actions of self and/or others within the assessment process and that the needs and expectations of self are sufficiently fulfilled.

P₅, P₇, P₁₁, and P₁₃, who all related the many ways in which their experience was negative, but who also were positively related with other participants in the assessment process, all explicitly acknowledged the significance of the lack of reliance on their instructor/s, and implied that they either more or less deliberately avoided open confrontation or expression of their dissatisfaction, in front of the instructors. The lack of reliance, for P₅ and P₁₃, mainly came through as a lack of

reliance on their workplace supervisor, with whom they had a conflicting relationship. For P₇ and P₁₁ it was a matter of lacking of reliance on both of their instructors (the teacher and the workplace supervisor). However, the fact that they were all also positively related to others within the assessment process, shows that there is something in the situation that is individually determined, and related to instructor and context specific circumstances, that may affect one's reliance on others, and make the situation as a whole at the same time positively and negatively related for the student: P₁₃ felt relieved after being able to share her past and present conflicts and disappointments with the teacher without being criticized, P₅ felt satisfied with her relationship with the teacher from who she received encouragement and support, P₇ acknowledged herself being only positively appraised by the instructors, and P₁₁ felt being able to show her uncertainty in front of her peer student. Nonetheless, they all expressed that they were lacking of reliance on the more knowledgeable other/s (the instructors), from whom they expected appropriate response to their needs and expectations, within the educational process.

Also P₈ and P₁₆ implied to their reliance on the more knowledgeable others, but more indirectly. They also less explicitly implied to more or less deliberate avoidance of confrontation with the workplace supervisors. P₈ and P₁₆ both announced that although they were lacking of accurate feedback and constructive criticism about their skills and actions at the workplace, they were positively related with the situation otherwise. P₈ said that he felt being treated as a trustworthy colleague by other physiotherapists at the workplace, and P₁₆ stated that his capability for independent work was positively judged by the main workplace supervisor, at the beginning of the work-placement. The implication being that regardless of the individual and contextual variation, or the different words, these are both expressions of the lack of fulfillment of self-interest, but they are also expressions of the reliance on the more knowledgeable others (the workplace supervisors) in the fulfillment of the self-interest.

6.1.5 Sense of safety and openness

The atmosphere of safety and openness is as significant as the sense of reliance on self and others, in accounting for the overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction of the student within the work-placement assessment process. The degree of the sense of

safety and openness strongly depends upon the instructor and workplace specific circumstances. In the case of P₆, P₉, P₁₄, and P₁₅, the sense of safety and openness mainly came through closeness and availability of the instructors, and for P₂, it came through closeness of home and availability of the teacher and the peer student online. For P₁₀ and P₁₂, who did their work-placement in a foreign country as a part of a student exchange program, the sense of safety and openness came through availability of support from each other (face-to-face) and (online) from the teacher they were more familiar with. In the case of P₁, P₃, and P₄, it came through lack of collaboration or close relationship with the more knowledgeable others (workplace supervisors), and for P₅, P₇, P₈, P₁₁, and P₁₃, and P₁₆, it came through avoidance of collaboration and/or expression of true needs, feelings, or vulnerabilities.

The atmosphere of safety and openness is as significant for the student as the sense of trust in self and others according to the data of this study, although it is mostly indirect. Of course, P₂'s relief of being able to do her first work-placement near home concerns safety; the fact that moving out (from home) was not easy for her soon after a tragic incident that affected her life, has everything to do with safety. P₂ emphasized the closeness of her home, but the closeness signified safety, and she apparently felt more secure in a work-placement near home. P₁, P₃, and P₄, all emphasized the significance of collaboration and assessment discussion that they were lacking with the supervisor, but the desired relationship (closeness) with the supervisor again signified something that could make them feel less insecure about their actions during their first work-placement. While the words are different, the educational sense is the same: there is something about the situation that makes it more or less safe for the student.

P₆, P₉, P₁₄, and P₁₅, all emphasized their positive relationship with their instructors, and the role of the instructors in the establishment of the safe and open atmosphere, although in somewhat different words. Of course, P₆'s notions of the attention that the main supervisor was paying on P₆'s needs and interests, during the close collaboration and assessment discussion, throughout the work-placement, are concrete expressions of safety. P₆ also said that the collaboration with her peers, face-to-face and online, also gave her "assurance" of being on track during the work-placement. Thus, P₆ emphasized closeness and confidence in her comments but they signified safety. P₉ almost similarly stated that nobody had previously paid so much attention to her needs and interests during work-placements as her workplace

supervisor. The reason P₆ was pleased with the attention, and that her needs and interests were valued and appropriately heard by the supervisor, was that it made her feel confident and safe. She too did not say this explicitly, but the context makes it clear. P₉ was able to choose the location and the special area of her work-placement and the learning assignment (writing the learning diary) related to the work-placement after her own interest. The positive experience of her own initiatives and collaboration with the workplace supervisor were both concrete expressions of her feelings of confidence and safety. P₉ stated that the workplace supervisor continuously asked about her needs and interests during the work-placement, and followed her request to give her immediate feedback about her skills and actions, from the very beginning of the work-placement.

P₁₄ acknowledged that although there was a lot of independent work during the work-placement, and the workplace supervisors made no investment separately for assessment *per se*, they were always available for discussion, answering her questions, and sharing their knowledge. These were P₁₄'s own expressions, and, of course, they are concrete expressions of safety and trust. She also explicitly said that she knew that the workplace supervisors did not assume that she would manage without receiving any help or advice from her supervisors. P₁₅ almost similarly emphasized the significance of the availability of the instructors' back-up, and that the supervisor paid attention to her needs and expectations. P₁₅ also emphasized the presence of the teacher at the final assessment discussion, and explicitly stated that because of the safe atmosphere and the compassionate attitude of her instructors, she was able to share her past negative experiences and struggle with coping with the instructors, which she felt relieving. While the words are again different, the educational sense is still the same: there is something about the situation related to instructor and workplace specific circumstances that makes it more satisfactory and safe for the student.

P₁₃ stated, almost similarly with P₁₅, that she felt relieving to be able to share her past and present negative experiences related to work-placements with the teacher, without any fear of being questioned or criticized. The lack of fear clearly signifies the presence of safety and openness. On the other hand, however, P₁₃ stated that she deliberately tried to avoid any confrontation with the main supervisor. The reason was that she was not sure if it was safe or not. She did not say this explicitly, but in other words; she simply said that she feared its consequences. P₁₃

also acknowledged that the authority of the main supervisor was hardly ever questioned by others supervisors at the workplace, and that it was the main supervisor who decided her grade at the end of the work-placement. Here, the educational sense of the concrete experience is clear as well; there is something about the instructor and workplace specific circumstances that make the situation more or less safe for open expression of negative experience for the student.

Similarly, P₇, who questioned the rationale behind the course of action of both of her instructors (the teacher and the supervisor) and the assessment practice, said that she deliberately avoided open expression of her negative experience in front of the workplace supervisor. Differently from P₁₃, she did not explicitly say the reason. P₇ declared, however, that although the emphasis in assessment was in student self-assessment, she perceived the assessment of her own actions frustrating and ineffective, was lacking of accurate information about her skills and actions, and felt that she was not required enough by the instructors. Of course this has everything to do with the lack of safety and openness, and is related to her lack of reliance on self or others as the assessors of self. P₁₁ almost similarly with P₁₃ stated that she was not sure whether or not she should reveal her uncertainty and dissatisfaction with the situation in front of the workplace supervisor. She too did not explicitly say the reason, but the context makes it clear. P₁₁ was able to be open with her peer student, with whom she shared a similar (critical) attitude and position, unlike the supervisor, whose pedagogical competence she questioned. Thus, in all cases, there is something about the situation that is individually determined, and related to the instructor and workplace specific circumstances, that makes the situation more or less satisfying, for the student, and either prevents or supports the atmosphere of safety and openness.

6.1.6 Emotional engagement

It is clear that the sense of emotional engagement is critical to all aspects of the process. The experience of reliance and safety must be felt, and the sense of shared interest, enhancement and support, and resemblance between assumptions and practice, all require emotional engagement in order to be acknowledged. The complexity of the emotional engagement in the process as a whole is also impossible

to articulate in the scope of this research, and would require much deeper understanding of the phenomenon. What is important in this context is perhaps to recognize that the emotional engagement is present in all aspects of the process and cannot thus be ignored. The apparent presence of the emotional aspects, were also acknowledged by the participants of this study.

P₁, P₃, and P₄, all explicitly acknowledged their feelings of dissatisfaction with the situation, but showed no attempt or striving for change. However, one must be mindful of the brevity of the period (two weeks) spent at the workplace, and that it was their very first work-placement within the present program. Nevertheless, they all explicitly stated their negative feelings within the assessment practice that they found clashing with their own expectations. P₁ stated her feelings of disappointment and frustration of not being properly assessed, and the having no goals to be achieved. P₃ too stated his frustration that his capability to meet the workplace requirements, were not taken into account in the assessment of the work-placement. P₄ announced her disappointment with the poor investment of both the workplace supervisor and her peer student on feedback. The implication of all three cases is that there was not much room for dealing with the negative feelings, since the distance between the expectations and actual practice seemed too hard to overcome. One might also consider the relatedness of their experience with the early study phase.

However, it was P₂ who explicitly announced her feelings of satisfaction with her first work-placement and her own active input in the exploration of her goals and interests with supervisors, and explicitly acknowledged her feelings of the lack of feedback as a challenge for further improvement of self. P₂ also said that she was pleased to be able to accomplish her first work-placement near home, since moving out from home soon after a tragic incident that affected her life had not been easy to her. Thus, apparently closeness of home that signified safety related to her feelings of overall satisfaction, but she also emphasized her prior experience in the acknowledgement of the importance of her own initiatives, and her need for further improvement in asking and receiving more relevant feedback for self.

Besides, P₅, P₇, P₁₁, and P₁₃, who were in different stages of education, all declared their disappointment with the assessment practice related to their last work-placement. They also were all more or less dwelling with their negative feelings, and not actively confronting the dissatisfying situation. P₅, who was a second year student, explicitly announced that during the work-placement, she mainly felt being

belittled and negatively appraised by the workplace supervisor, and felt disappointing, that not even the teacher and her peer student were defending her, when she couldn't. P₅ stated that she deliberately avoided open confrontation with the supervisor, because of fearing its consequences. P₅ also said that she didn't participate in the joint reflection day at school, because she was not able to express her true (negative) feelings or experiences of the work-placement, in front of the teacher and her peers. Thus she speaks about feelings of disappointment, avoidance, and fear, and about feelings of being belittled, which all signify her feelings of vulnerability and lack of safety and openness.

Also P₇ stated that she, during the work-placement, tried to avoid open confrontation with the workplace supervisor, who she perceived mainly positively appraising her abilities, whilst she desired for more accurate and critical feedback. She did not explicitly say so but the context makes it clear that she was concerned about the potential consequences of expressing her authentic feelings in front of the supervisor, which clearly signifies her feelings of vulnerability. P₇ explicitly stated that she perceived self-assessment frustrating and ineffective, and thus felt disappointed with the lack of discussion about her skills and actions with the workplace supervisor. Her negative feelings were clearly related with her complementary needs and interests, which she apparently did not feel safe to express in front of the more knowledgeable others (the teacher and the workplace supervisor).

P₁₁ explicitly stated that she felt disappointed with the course of action of both of her instructors, the teacher and the workplace supervisor, and had doubts about the pedagogical competence of the supervisor and her final grade (the second highest). P₁₁ also felt uncertain about her own role at the workplace, and whether or not she should show her uncertainty in front of the supervisor. Also P₁₁, similarly with P₇, did not express her true (negative) feelings in front of her teacher and peer students. She also distrusted the workplace supervisor's capability to understand her needs for receiving feedback about the skills and actions of self, and explicitly stated that (although lacking of relevant feedback) she was not willing to expose her needs and insecurities, in front of the supervisor. P₁₁'s disappointment with the teacher is mainly related with the teacher's absence; that the teacher was not able to visit at the workplace early enough, and was not present at the final assessment discussion. P₁₁ too speaks about her feelings of disappointment, doubt, and uncertainty, and the absence of the teacher, which all signify her lack of safety and trust. Her emotional

engagement is also related to her past negative experiences of being unfairly questioned in front of significant others.

P₁₃ was the one who explicitly stated her conflicting relation and disappointment with the main workplace supervisor, whose actions were hardly ever questioned by others at the workplace, including student assessment. P₁₃ also said that because of fearing the consequences, she felt better to avoid open questioning of the dissatisfying situation, or the actions of the main supervisor. P₁₃, similarly with P₅, announced her disappointment with the lack of support from others, in the assessment and grading of the work-placement, but in her case from the other supervisors with whom she felt she had a more positive relationship otherwise. P₁₃ too based on her past negative experiences did not express her genuine (negative) feelings or experiences of the work-placement in front of the teacher and peers, at school. However, P₁₃ also explicitly declared her feelings of relief with being able to share her past and present negative experiences with the teacher, during the work-placement, without being criticized or questioned. Thus, P₁₃ speaks about both strongly negative and strongly positive feelings related to safety and trust, and/or the complimentary needs and interests of self (and their fulfillment), which either prevented or supported open expression of her genuine feelings and experiences.

Also P₁₅, who clearly announced her overall satisfaction with the work-placement and its assessment practice, explicitly expressed her feelings of relief with being able to share her past negative experiences and struggle with coping with the instructors. P₁₅ stated that the teacher's presence in that situation was "crucial" to her, highlighting the significance of the compassionate attitude of the teacher as well. P₁₅ also said that her workplace supervisor, with whom she had a satisfying relationship, paid close attention to her needs and expectations throughout the work-placement, in a constructive manner. P₁₅ stated that the positive feedback she received from the supervisor about her competence also repaired her self-trust that had been impaired in the past.

P₆, P₉, and P₁₄, too, emphasized their feelings of overall satisfaction with the work-placement assessment practice, and with the course of actions of their workplace supervisors, with whom they had a satisfying relationship. P₆ declared her satisfaction with the attitude and actions of the main supervisor and how there was an ongoing exploration and assessment discussion about her plans and actions with the throughout the work-placement. P₆, however, also explicitly stated her

dissatisfaction with the course of actions of the other supervisor, who she felt paying less attention to her needs and interests, and her lack of accurate information about the level of her skills at the end of the work-placement. P₉, who amongst her satisfaction with the course of action of the workplace supervisors, also emphasized her own input in asking and receiving immediate feedback about her skills and actions, stated, that her supervisors paid more attention to her needs and expectations throughout the work-placement than any other supervisor before. P₁₄ almost similarly announced her satisfaction with her own active input and the mutual relationship with her workplace supervisors. P₁₄ on the other hand explicitly stated that she was slightly lacking of the attention and feedback she previously received from her peer students online. So, P₆, P₉, P₁₄, and P₁₅, all speak about their feelings of satisfaction related to close attention that their instructors were paying on their needs and expectations, and with the closeness (and mutual) of the relationship with the instructors in general, which all signifies their experience of safety and trust and shared interest/s as well.

P₁₀ and P₁₂ both explicitly announced their feelings of satisfaction with the support they received from each other face-to-face and from their (home-school) teacher online within a dissatisfying situation at the workplace. P₁₀ stated that a change for better occurred after she first shared her negative experience with her teacher and peer and received support and encouragement from them both, and then decided to take a more active role in the assessment practice, in asking more relevant feedback from the workplace supervisor. However, P₁₀ stated that at the end of the placement, she was still lacking of proper assessment discussion with the supervisor about the level of the skills and achievements of self. P₁₂ explicitly said that, in her case, the dissatisfying situation soon changed for better, after she decided to take an active role and began to ask more feedback about her actions from the workplace supervisors. P₁₂ also stated that being able to share her negative experiences, in the beginning of the work-placement, with the teacher and her peer student, gave her encouragement for the confrontation and striving for change. Thus they both talk about feelings of being supported and encouraged, and the significance of being able to share their negative experiences with others, which all together signify safety and openness, and a positive sense of shared interests with others, and occurred in relation to their own actions.

P₈ and P₁₆, both explicitly announced that they were not fully content with their work-placement and its assessment practice. P₈ said that he was mainly dissatisfied with the lack of resemblance between his learning goals and the daily actions at the workplace, and felt frustrating the time and effort that was paid for the creation of the learning goals beforehand. P₈ also felt disappointing that the supervisors did not pay much attention to his goals and achievements, and did not give much feedback either until the very end of the work-placement. Nevertheless, P₈ said that he did not actively ask for more feedback from his supervisor, and was content with the situation otherwise, since he felt that he was positively acknowledged and treated as a trustworthy colleague by others at the workplace. Also P₁₆ stated that he never expressed his dissatisfaction with the situation for his main supervisor, who, in the beginning of the work-placement made the judgment about his competence for working independently. Furthermore, P₁₆ almost similarly with P₈ declared his dissatisfaction with the situation, by stating that he felt being left too much alone with the exploration of his goals and achievements, while the main supervisor paid rather little attention on his goals and outcomes until the very end of the work-placement. P₁₆ too acknowledged that he was treated more as a worker than as a student. Thus, they both speak about their feelings of dissatisfaction, and a lack of feedback and attention from the workplace supervisors, but they also speak about feelings of being valued and acknowledged by the knowledgeable others at the workplace. They also did not express their genuine (negative) feelings and experiences, and/or needs and interests, in front of the more knowledgeable other/s, in this case, the workplace supervisors. Thus, while the words are different, the educational engagement is clearly present in the experience of each student, regardless of the characteristics of the situation otherwise. However, it is most explicit when not being able to share the past or present negative assessment experience with others.

6.1.7 Sense of enhancement and support

The sense of enhancement of learning and improvement of self and receiving support from others is as critical as the sense of resemblance between the assumptions of self and the actual practice, for the actualization of the more positive or negative meaning of work-placement assessment. If the perception is positive, it

refers to all the factors in the concrete experience that the student perceives in such a way that it enables her/him to lend her/himself to the educational process in a way that is (most enhancing to self. Or, if the perception is negative, it refers to all the factors in the concrete experience that the student perceives in such a way that it prevents her/him from lending her/himself to the educational process in a way that is most enhancing for self.

P₁, P₃, P₄, P₅, P₇, P₈, P₁₁, P₁₃, and P₁₆, all more or less explicitly announced, although in different words, that they were not able to benefit from their work-placement and its assessment practice, in the best possible way. P₁ stated that without proper feedback and joint discussion about her goals, actions, and achievements with the workplace supervisors, she didn't know whether her actions were right or wrong, and what she should have been doing for the enhancement of her actions during the work-placement. P₃ simply said that because his abilities to meet the workplace requirements were not properly assessed by the workplace supervisors, she felt that the work-placement as a whole didn't really enhance his learning or motivate him for further improvement. P₄ explicitly acknowledged that she was lacking of similar opportunities for learning and self-improvement than some of her peer students, because the main supervisor at the workplace paid little attention to student feedback or assessment discussion during the work-placement. P₅ clearly stated that the way she was being treated by the main workplace supervisor, not only lowered her motivation and willingness to ask feedback or advice from the supervisor but also diminished the opportunities for learning and improvement of self. Also P₇ said that her motivation and opportunities for learning and self-improvement were lowered during the work-placement, but the reason was that that she wasn't required enough by her instructors. P₇ stated that too much emphasis was put in student self-assessment, while she was lacking of constructive feedback about her skills and actions at the workplace.

P₈, P₁₁, and P₁₃ were those who did not express their lack of enhancement and support so directly but the context makes it clear. P₈ (besides lacking of joint exploration and direct feedback about his skills and actions at the workplace) said that he was left alone by the workplace supervisors with the exploration of his goals and actions until the very end of the work-placement. P₈ also said he felt frustrating that so much time and effort was put on defining the learning goals, when the daily situations at the workplace defined his actions and the content

of his learning more than his learning goals. Also P₁₁ said she was frustrated with her situation at the workplace, and the reason was that besides lacking of relevant feedback about her skills and actions, she was lacking of enhancement and support that she desired from the workplace supervisor. She too did not say this explicitly, but the context makes it clear. P₁₁ was not able to expose her needs and insecurities in front of the workplace supervisor whose competence to understand her needs and interests she couldn't trust.

Of course, P₁₃'s avoidance of confrontation with the workplace supervisor with whom she had a conflicting relationship, is a direct concern with safety and trust, and enhancement and support; the fact that she felt being harshly and unfairly criticized by the main workplace supervisor, whose authority she said was hardly ever questioned by other supervisors, had everything to do with the lack of safety, and the lack of enhancement and support. It was P₁₆ who again more explicitly acknowledged that while he felt being treated more as a colleague rather than as a student by his workplace supervisors, he was still lacking of direct feedback about his skills and actions that he desired, and thus was not able to get the full potential out of his last work-placement; for the enhancement of the learning and improvement of self. While the words are different, the educational sense is the same: there is something about the situation that is related to workplace specific circumstances, and the actions of self and others, that makes it more dissatisfying for the student, and that s/he perceives the situation in such a way that it prevents her/him from lending her/himself to the educational process in a way that is most enhancing for the learning and improvement of self.

However, in the context of their mainly negative experience, they all had some positive experiences of the enhancement and/or support as well. P₁ stated that being told that she knew what she was doing with patients by one of the workplace supervisors, gave her some assurance of her own abilities and being on-track. P₃ simply said that the positive feedback he received about his skills and actions from his patients felt encouraging. P₄ said that by reflecting her own actions and trying to learn from the work of others, she was able to notice some improvement in her own actions. P₅ stated that she was pleased with the teacher's attitude that she felt encouraging. P₇, although feeling frustrated, acknowledged that the feedback she received from both of her instructors during the work-placement was almost entirely positive and affirmative. P₈ stated that he was pleased with being treated as a

trustworthy colleague by the workplace supervisors. P₁₁ said that the feedback she received from her peer student about her actions at the workplace was helpful. P₁₃ stated that she felt more reasonably treated by the less experienced supervisors, who gave her positive and constructive feedback about her actions. P₁₆ said that he found the online comments from the teacher helpful in the exploration of his goals and achievement during the work-placement. Thus, while the words again different, the educational sense is the same; there is something about the situation that makes it satisfying (or positively related) for the student although being negatively related with the situation otherwise.

P₂, P₆, P₉, P₁₄, and P₁₅, although verbalizing it differently, all announced their satisfaction with the work-placement as a whole, including assessment, and more or less explicitly acknowledged enhancing their own learning and improvement. P₂ and P₁₄ both addressed taking an active role of self as a necessity in the enhancement of their own learning and improvement, including assessment. P₂ stated that she based on her past experience acknowledged that taking an active role of self would be the best way for enhancing a shared awareness of her goals and interests at the workplace. Besides, P₂ explicitly acknowledged her need for further self-improvement in order to be able to ask and to receive more adequate feedback from others. P₁₄ explicitly announced the necessity for taking an active and responsible role of self in the advancement of her own learning and improvement during the work-placement, in general, including her deliberate reflection of her daily patient situations. P₁₄ also explicitly referred to the positive impact of the availability of supervisors' support, and the weekly sessions with the supervisors which were organized based on her own needs and interests. P₆ mainly emphasized the actions and arrangements of the main workplace supervisor, in the creation of a supportive learning environment, and in receiving continuous feedback about the course of her actions from throughout the work-placement. Besides, P₆ also positively acknowledged the feedback she received from the teacher and peers online – that she felt enhancing the creation of concrete and achievable learning goals, and giving her assurance of “being on-track.” P₉, P₁₄, and P₁₅, all highlighted their own active initiatives in the enhancement of the assessment process, and the mutual relationship/s with their instructors. Besides, they all addressed the positive impact of the continuous exploration of their goals, actions, and achievements, with the workplace supervisors, for their learning and improvement. P₉ similarly with P₁₄ also

emphasized her own deliberate actions in writing down her daily experiences within patient situations. P₉ stated that writing down her experiences made her own learning and improvement more concrete and visible and enhanced self-assessment, at the end of the work-placement. P₁₄ said that she was able to benefit from her own recordings afterwards when working with the same patient again. So, they all perceived themselves being able to lend to the work-placement as an educational process in a way that they felt enhancing their learning and improvement, including assessment.

However, in the context of their mainly positive experience, they all had some negative experiences of the enhancement and support. P₂ desired for more relevant feedback about her skills and actions from the supervisors, P₆ felt uncertain about the level of her skills and actions related to the study phase, P₉, regardless of her silent acceptance of the teacher's impact in changing her grade for better, implied for trusting more on the supervisor's feedback, P₁₄ felt that she was lacking of the attention and assurance she received from her peers related to past work-placements, and P₁₅ still desired for more active and responsible role of the teachers, in protecting students from the "bad" work-placement experiences. Hence, although the words are different, and they all have some individually negative experiences, the general sense of the experience is fairly similar. They all felt that they were able to lend themselves to the educational process, including assessment, in such a way that they believed was most enhancing for reaching their goals and outcomes during the work-placement: P₂ mainly through her own active role and initiatives; P₆ mainly through the supportive arrangements and actions by the workplace supervisor; P₉, P₁₄, and P₁₅, by the means of their own active initiatives and also through the initiatives of their workplace supervisors, in paying attention and responding to their needs and interests in such a way that they felt enhancing their learning and improvement. Additionally, P₆, P₉, and P₁₅, also positively related to their teacher's input: P₆ in receiving useful comments in the creation of concrete and achievable learning goals; P₉ in the change of her final grade; and P₁₅ in the creation of such a supportive atmosphere that she felt safe to share her past negative experiences with her instructors.

Also P₁₀ and P₁₂, who were third year students, both emphasized their own active involvement in the course of their work-placement and its assessment practice, which too had everything to do with their experience of the enhancement

and support for their own learning and improvement. According to P₁₀ herself, at the beginning of the work-placement, she first got alarmed with the workplace requirements, and whether she would receive sufficient feedback for learning and improvement. However, with the support from the teacher and her peer student (P₁₂), she then decided to take a more active role of self, and began to ask (and also to receive) more feedback about her actions at the workplace, from the workplace supervisor. P₁₂, almost similarly, after being first disappointed with the course of action of her workplace supervisors, at the beginning of the work-placement, shared her negative experience with the teacher and the peer (P₁₀), and then began asking more directly feedback from the supervisors. They both then acknowledged a positive change in their situation, and felt that they received more relevant feedback about their skills and actions. So, although the words are again different, the educational sense of the two experiences is clearly the same: there is something about the situation that is related to the acknowledgement of the actions of self and others, and a change occurring in the situation, that makes it more satisfying (or positively related) for the student, and enables the student to lend herself to the educational process, in a way that she feels more enhancing for self.

However it is verbalized, it seems that the sense of enhancement and support, safety and trust, and emotional engagement, all relate to one significant factor; that the student does or does not feel able to express her/his genuine feelings and experiences and/or needs and interests, in front of other participants in the assessment process, and feels that these personal issues are either more or less appropriately heard and responded by others. The different words refer to different enablers or obstacles for the expression and fulfillment of the subjective interests, by which the student is living within the situation, and how satisfying (or educationally 'good') or dissatisfying (or educationally 'bad') s/he feels that situation. Safety and openness in the situation means that the student does or does not feel the situation safe enough to openly express her/his genuine feelings, and needs and interests in front of others; reliance in self and other/s means that, within that situation, the student feels that s/he has either more or less trust in self and/or other/s in the recognition and fulfillment of her/his subjective needs and interests; sense of enhancement and support implies that the student feels that s/he, within that situation, is receiving either more or less sufficient attention and respond to her/his personal issues, and feels that the fulfillment of her/his subjective interests and the

positive meaning of work-placement assessment then may/may not have a chance of being actualized; sense of emotional and other involvement implies how exactly the student feels s/he is living within that situation related to the assumptions and interests of self, the specific circumstances, and the significant other/s.

6.1.8 Challenge to fulfillment of self-interest

Assessment in higher education, in general, is full of complexities and contingencies, so it is not surprising that assessment related to a work-placement brings challenges to the subjective interests by which the student is living. These complex and contingent factors are undoubtedly what make the assessment practice individually challenging and perhaps unpredictable. The emotional engagement of the student, as well the actions of other participants in the assessment process, in recognizing and responding to these subjective interests, and the individual and unpredictable challenges, can prevent or support the creation of such an environment, in which the student may feel, that her/his personal issues are appropriately heard and responded within the assessment process, and s/he may feel safe to express her/his genuine interests, feelings and vulnerabilities, in front of others, so that fulfillment of self-interest (the desire in self for obtaining sufficient self-knowledge), and the positive meaning of work-placement assessment thus may have a chance of being actualized. Or, the emotional engagement of the student may also challenge the assumptions and self-interest by which the student is living in such a way that s/he feels that her/his personal issues are not appropriately heard and responded within the assessment process, and does not feel safe to express her/his genuine interests, feelings and vulnerabilities in front of the others, so that fulfillment of self-interest and the positive meaning of work-placement assessment may not have a chance of being actualized, but instead, a more negative meaning may actualize. The sixteen students of this study are no exception to this generalization.

P₁, P₃, and P₄, who were all first-year students, acknowledged that there was much learning and improvement to do ahead of them, and thus had positive expectations related to the work-placement, of the enhancement of their learning and of the exploration of their skills and actions, and receiving direct feedback from the workplace supervisors. Nevertheless, they all related many ways in which they felt

that their self-interest was more or less challenged during the work-placement. P₁ felt that during the work-placement her goals were not appropriately explored and her skills and actions were not properly assessed, and that she was lacking of opportunities for comparing her self-observations with the feedback from her supervisors. P₃ said that the first work-placement offered an authentic learning site that he had much been waiting for, and he thus felt disappointing that his skills and actions, or his capability to meet the workplace requirements, were not properly assessed during the work-placement. P₃ explicitly stated that the work-placement didn't really enhance his learning or motivate him for further improvement. Also P₄, who was disappointed with the low investment of her workplace supervisor on student feedback and assessment discussion in general, clearly stated that she felt that the situation lowered her opportunities for learning and further improvement.

Although the words are different, the educational sense is similar. They all clearly acknowledged their own self-interest but felt that their personal needs and interests were not appropriately privileged and responded within the assessment process by others. Yet, none of them implied to any attempt for active confrontation with the dissatisfying situation, other than P₃ – that he once asked with his peer students the main supervisor to specify their tasks at the workplace. Although they all felt the situation disappointing and/or frustrating, they for some reason or other did not actively strive for a change. One could, assume, that since P₁, P₃, and P₄, were all at an early stage of their educational programs, they may have had very little (if any) experience of similar situations, and thus may have felt vulnerable about themselves, and being less ready for active confrontation and/or initiatives of self, within dissatisfying situations, if compared to more experienced peers. Besides, the period of work-placement was relatively short, only two weeks. It was, however, P₂, who explicitly announced her satisfaction with her two-week work-placement and its assessment practice, and relied on her own active initiatives, in the enhancement of the shared awareness with instructors about the aim and goals of the work-placement. Also when acknowledging her lack of relevant feedback at the end of the work-placement, P₂ explicitly announced her interest for further improvement of self, in asking and receiving more relevant feedback from others, in the future. Nonetheless, P₂ did say that she had prior experience of similar situations, and stated the necessity of the active role and initiatives of self.

Similarly with P₂, although the words are different, and they all had some individually negative experiences, the general sense of the experience of P₆, P₉, P₁₄, and P₁₆, is fairly similar. They all perceived that their own active initiatives enhanced lending themselves to the process in such a way that they believed was most enhancing for reaching their goals and outcomes during the work-placement. However, they also acknowledged the role and input of their instructors in the enhancement of the fulfillment of their self-interest: P₆ by addressing the supportive arrangements and actions of the workplace supervisor, and P₉, P₁₄, and P₁₅, by announcing the positive impact of the supervisors' continuous attention and respond to their needs and interests, giving direct feedback about their skills and actions and/or exploring and commenting their goals and desired outcomes, in several phases of the work-placement. P₆, P₉, and P₁₅, also positively related to their teacher's input: P₆ by noting the usefulness of the teacher's comments to the creation of concrete and achievable learning goals, P₉ by addressing the teacher's role in grading, and P₁₅ by emphasizing the teacher's role in the creation of safe and supportive atmosphere. Although verbalizing it differently, the educational sense is similar: they all clearly acknowledged their own interests and were all actively striving for the fulfillment of the self-interest, and felt that their personal needs and expectations were appropriately heard and responded within the assessment process by others, and P₉, for example, felt safe to share her past negative experiences with the instructors.

P₁₀ and P₁₂, who were both third year students and did their work-placement in a foreign country, both stated that at the beginning of their work-placement they were mainly disappointed with their situation, and were lacking of feedback and collaboration with their workplace supervisors that they expected. However, they both said that soon after their own active initiatives in asking more feedback about their actions from the supervisors, they experienced a change for better at the workplace. P₁₀ said that after getting alarmed, whether she would receive enough feedback and instruction from the supervisor, who emphasized the requirements for independent work, she then, with the support from the teacher online and the peer student face-to-face, decided to take a more active role of self, and began to ask and to receive more relevant feedback from the supervisor. Almost similarly, P₁₂, after being first disappointed with the course of actions of the supervisors at the workplace, and sharing her negative experience with the teacher

and the peer, began to ask and to receive more direct feedback about her actions at the workplace. Although the words are somewhat different, the educational sense is clearly the same: the acknowledgement of the challenge for the fulfillment of the self-interest, at the beginning of the work-placement, together with the support from others, motivates the student for active initiatives and striving for change, that is, asking more relevant feedback that she feels she is lacking.

P₈ and P₁₆, who were in different phases of their education, P₈ on the second year and P₁₆ close to his graduation, both more or less explicitly expressed their dissatisfaction with the course of their work-placement and its assessment practice, within the context of being positively related with the situation otherwise. They both declared that their goals and desired outcomes for the work-placement were not sufficiently regarded during the work-placement, and that they were lacking of feedback about their skills and actions that they desired from their workplace supervisors. However, they both addressed that they did not openly express their disappointment at the workplace. Although P₈ said that he was lacking of feedback, and felt that his goals and expectations were not properly heard at the workplace, he implied that he felt content with the situation otherwise. P₈ stated that he felt being treated as a trustworthy colleague at the workplace, since he had a clear timetable and responsibilities with his own patients. P₁₆, almost similarly, although feeling a lack of feedback and being left alone with the exploration of his goals and actions, implied that he felt content with the situation otherwise. P₁₆ stated that, at the beginning of the work-placement, his competency for independent work was approved by the main supervisor, and he was never directly criticized at the workplace. P₁₆ said, however, that while being treated more as a worker rather than a student, he felt that he did not receive the full potential for learning and improvement that he would have desired from his last work-placement. Although the words are different, the educational sense is the same: they both acknowledged the desire in self for obtaining self-knowledge through assessment encounters (in this case, through the feedback from others), and the challenge for the fulfillment of the self-interest, but this happened with the acknowledgement of the positive acknowledgement from others at the workplace otherwise. So, the tension between the positive acknowledgement and lack of fulfillment of self-interest leads to avoidance of confrontation with the dissatisfying situation and expression of the authentic feelings at the workplace.

P₅, P₇, P₁₁, and P₁₃, who were all in different phases of their education, P₅ and P₇ in the second year, P₁₁ in the third, and P₁₃ close to her graduation, all announced their dissatisfaction with the course of their work-placement and its assessment practice, and the actions of their instructor/s. Although they were all lacking of feedback that they desired about their skills and actions at the workplace, none of them openly expressed their true (negative) feelings and/or experience/s in front of the other/s, or asked more feedback from the instructors. Besides lacking of feedback and support from her instructors P₅ felt that she was also lacking of support from her peer student, who did her placement at the same workplace. According to P₅ herself, she was not willing to expose her true feelings in front of the workplace supervisor who she felt dismissing her, or the teacher and her peers at school; the implication being that the instructor and workplace specific circumstances, and the lack of safety and openness within the assessment environment, regardless of the acknowledgement of the challenge to the fulfillment of self-interest, lead to the avoidance of expressing one's genuine needs and interests, in front of other participants in the assessment process.

P₁₃ almost similarly, although in different words, stated that although she acknowledged her lack of relevant feedback and support from the workplace supervisor, she wanted to avoid confrontation with the supervisor, with whom she had a conflicting relationship, and based on her past negative experiences of similar situations, was not willing to expose her true feelings and experience of the work-placement afterwards, in front of the teacher and peers at school. However, P₁₃ said that she felt relieved when being able to share her negative experience with the teacher, during the work-placement, and that she became aware of some new characteristics about the teacher that she didn't know before. Also P₁₁ was not willing to express her true feelings to the workplace supervisor, whom she didn't trust, but she was not able to lean on the teacher either. However, P₁₁ felt that she was able to expose her uncertainty in front of her peer student, who did her placement at the same workplace, and gave her valuable feedback.

So P₁₁ and P₁₃ both, besides their mainly negative experience, were able to share their negative experience with somebody who they felt safe and supportive. Yet, regardless of their awareness of the challenge for fulfillment of the self-interest, and of their dissatisfaction with the situation, the students did not feel safe to openly confront the dissatisfying situation, or show their true feelings to all participants in the

assessment process. P₇ announced that although she was lacking of accurate and critical feedback from both of her instructors, who mainly gave her positive and affirmative feedback, she tried to avoid any confrontation with the workplace supervisor. The reason is that she feared its possibly negative consequences. She did not say this so directly, but the context makes it clear. Although the words and some of the characteristics of the experience are different, the educational sense of the experience of P₅, P₇, P₁₁, and P₁₃, is the same; and again, it seems to contain some kind of a paradox. P₇ and P₁₃ both wanted to prevent any conflicts with their supervisors, P₅ did not want to ask advice or feedback from the supervisor, and P₁₁ did not want to show her uncertainty in front of the supervisor. Nevertheless, they all by doing so enhanced the maintenance of the situation they all perceived dissatisfying. The implication being that by doing so, the fulfillment of their self-interest, or the positive meaning of work-placement assessment experience, did not have a chance of being actualized, but instead, a more negative meaning actualized.

6.2 POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE MEANINGS IN ASSESSMENT

As implied earlier, in the thesis, all of the implications of student assessment in higher education probably cannot be made explicit, and some aspects of assessment may only be understood through personal and shared experiences. This study thus aimed for a more thorough understanding and new insights to the meaning of student assessment, as experienced related to work-placements by undergraduate students, by the means of a descriptive phenomenological study. The study also helped to find out whether or not something 'positive' or 'negative', as experienced by students, from an educational perspective, could come from assessment in relation to work-placements. Next, a summary will be presented, based on the experiential data of this study, of these positively or negatively related (or educationally 'good' or 'bad') work-placement assessment experiences.

P₁, P₃, and P₄ who were all first year students, clearly stated their feelings of disappointment and frustration related to the course of the work-placement assessment process, and said that they were lacking of feedback and assessment discussion, and joint exploration of their goals and actions with their

instructors; and felt that the lack of feedback and collaboration during the work-placement lowered their motivation and opportunities for learning and self-improvement. P₁ and P₃ both questioned the course of the assessment practice and criteria and felt that no 'proper assessment' existed during the work-placement. Also P₄ questioned the assessment practice and said that she was disappointed with the low investment of the workplace supervisor and her peer student on assessment and feedback. So, the overall sense of the work-placement assessment experience, for P₁, P₃, and P₄, from an educational perspective, was mainly negative and related to their experience of the lack of proper assessment and feedback from others.

Also P₅, P₇, P₈, P₁₁, P₁₃, and P₁₆, although being in different stages of education, were all more or less disappointed with the course of the assessment process, and felt that besides lacking of relevant feedback, they also were lacking of opportunities for learning and self-improvement. P₅, P₁₁, and P₁₃ all announced their disappointment with the course of actions of their main supervisor at the workplace, and although acknowledging the lack of relevant feedback and support, did not express their dissatisfaction because of feeling in one way or another uncertain about the consequences. P₇, P₈, and P₁₆, who were all somehow dissatisfied with the expectations of their instructors, also did not express their true feelings to the instructors. All three acknowledged that their abilities, in one way or other, were positively appraised by their instructors, but yet stated that they were lacking of relevant feedback about their abilities from the instructors. Thus, the overall sense of the assessment experience, educationally speaking, nevertheless, was mainly negative and related to their experience of the *lack of support from others*.

P₁₀ and P₁₂, who were both third year students and did their work-placement in a foreign country, stated that, at the beginning, they were first dissatisfied with the situation at the workplace and felt that they were lacking of relevant feedback. However, they both stated that they later became more satisfied with the course of the assessment process, and the work-placement in general, after sharing their experience and receiving support (online), from the teacher they were more familiar with, and from each other (face-to-face), and beginning to ask and to receive more relevant feedback from their workplace supervisors. Hence, from an educational perspective, a change from 'negative' to 'positive' occurred, in relation to their own active role and the support from others.

P₂, P₆, P₉, P₁₄, and P₁₅, who were in different stages of their education, all clearly stated their satisfaction with the course of the work-placement and the assessment process, and the actions of self and/or others during the process. Besides the satisfaction with their own active role and initiatives in the assessment process, they were all pleased with the joint exploration of their goals, actions, and achievements with other participants (instructors and/or peers) in the assessment process, and experienced their relations with instructors (teacher and workplace supervisor/s) mainly positively. They also addressed their own self-observations and the feedback from others (instructors and/or peers) equally important in the enhancement of one's own learning and improvement. Thus, the overall sense of the assessment experience, educationally speaking, was mainly positive and related to their experience of the mutual role of self and others in the assessment process.

In summary, all sixteen participants, from an educational perspective, experienced the work-placement assessment process more or less positively or negatively meaningful. However, it must be noted that while there were some positive experiences, it could be so in the context of otherwise mainly negative experiences, or dealing with past negative experiences. Similarly, while there were some negative experiences, it could be so in the context of an active striving for (and achieving) a positive change, or apprehension of positive acknowledgement and trust from the more knowledgeable others at the workplace. For example, P₁, P₃, and P₄, who all clearly announced their dissatisfaction with the course of their assessment, also implied positive experiences of receiving assurance of their own abilities through self-observations or feedback from others. Similarly, P₈ and P₁₆, whilst stating their general disappointment with the course of the assessment practice, both implied positive acknowledgement from their supervisors at the workplace. Another example is how P₂ and P₆, although stating their satisfaction with the course of the assessment practice, announced their desire for more direct feedback and/or a better understanding of their abilities. Finally, P₁₅, who clearly announced her overall satisfaction with the work-placement assessment process, and the positive relations with her instructors, also expressed her feelings of vulnerability and relief when dealing with her past negative experiences of assessment with the instructors.

6.3 QUALITY OF RELATION BETWEEN ASSUMPTIONS AND PRACTICE

Whether or not a student, could acknowledge a sufficient resemblance between their expectations of the assessment process and the 'actual' assessment events, seemed to be critical factor, to have a more positively or negatively meaningful experience in work-placement assessment. P₁, P₃, P₄, P₅, P₇, and P₁₁, all felt that the course of assessment was mainly clashing with their own expectations of relevant feedback, assessment discussion, and/or collaboration with their instructors in general, and stated that the work-placement as such, didn't really enhance their learning or motivate them for further improvement during the work-placement.

P₈, P₁₃, and P₁₆, too, felt that the assessment process was not congruent with their own expectations, since they all felt that they were lacking of relevant feedback and/or sufficient relationship with the main workplace supervisor, although they all had positive relationship/s with their instructor/s otherwise. Also P₁₀ and P₁₂, both acknowledged that the assessment practice was clashing with their own expectations, at the beginning of the work-placement, as they were lacking of relevant feedback from the workplace supervisors. However, they both felt that with the help of their own active initiatives and support from others, they then began to receive more relevant feedback, and also became more satisfied with the assessment practice, finding it more congruent with their own expectations.

P₂, P₆, P₉, P₁₄, and P₁₅, all stated their satisfaction with the work-placement assessment process, finding the course of the actions of self and/or others, and the collaboration between self and other/s during the work-placement mainly congruent with one's own expectations. In summary, all the student participants of this study experienced the work-placement assessment process either more or less satisfactory or dissatisfactory, due to their experience of the resemblance between their own assumptions and the actual assessment practice.

6.4 SIMILAR RESULTS WITH PREVIOUS STUDIES

None of the findings of this study are totally new to educational researchers, although the same factors, and their lived educational meanings, particularly from the perspective of student assessment, may not be as much documented in the higher

educational literature as one might imagine. These are also factors that may sometimes be taken for granted while viewing and/or testing other theoretical constructions, and/or the causal relationships between variables and educational outcomes. Yet, all these factors are one way or other present in the higher educational literature and next their presence in the findings of other phenomenological studies in similar (health educational) contexts will be simply noted and presented in a table format (in Table 12) below as follows. However, no attempt is made to note their frequency.

Table 12. Findings of other phenomenological studies in similar contexts

Studies that address the meaning of positive and/or negative experiences related to work-placements.	Shen and Spouse (2007); Clouder and Toms (2008); Dall'Alba (2009); Baglin and Rugg (2010); Williams (2010); Bradbury-Jones, Sambrook and Irvine (2011); Melincavage (2011); Morris and Stew (2013); Del Prato (2013)
Studies that imply to the sense of self-acknowledgement from an educational perspective.	Chesser-Smyth (2005); Shen and Spouse (2007); Melincavage (2011); Del Prato (2013); Wilson (2014)
Studies that address the sense of resemblance between students' expectations and work-placement practices.	Delany and Bragge (2009); Baglin and Rugg (2010); Ashgar (2012)
Studies that address the sense of the relationship between students and work-placement instructors/educators.	Chesser-Smyth (2005); Shen and Spouse (2007); Delany and Bragge (2009); Bradbury-Jones, Sambrook and Irvine (2011); Melincavage (2011); Del Prato (2013)
Studies that address the sense of the student's reliance on self and/or others (educators and/or peers) during work-placement.	Chesser-Smyth (2005); Shen and Spouse (2007); Delany and Bragge (2009); Bradbury-Jones, Sambrook and Irvine (2011); Melincavage (2011); Del Prato (2013)
Studies that address the sense of safety and/or openness of the work-placement environment.	Chesser-Smyth (2005); Shen and Spouse (2007); Delany and Bragge (2009); Bradbury-Jones, Sambrook and Irvine (2011); Melincavage (2011); Del Prato (2013)
Studies that address the students' emotional engagement during clinical/work-placement.	Chesser-Smyth (2005); Shen and Spouse (2007); Bradbury-Jones, Sambrook and Irvine (2011); Melincavage (2011); Del Prato (2013); Wilson (2014)
Studies that address the sense of enhancement and/or support during clinical/work-placement.	Chesser-Smyth (2005); Shen and Spouse (2007); Clouder and Toms (2008); Baglin and Rugg (2010); Melincavage (2011); Bradbury-Jones, Sambrook and Irvine (2011); Jonsén, Melender and Hilli (2012); Del Prato (2013)
Studies that address the challenge to the student's needs and interests during clinical/work-placements.	Ashgar (2012); Del Prato (2013); Morris and Stew (2013); Dearnley, Taylor, Laxton, Rinomhota and Nkosana-Nyawata (2013)
Studies that address the meaning of assessment/feedback related to work-placements.	Shen and Spouse (2007); Clouder and Toms (2008); Dall'Alba (2009); Baglin and Rugg (2010); Williams (2010); Bradbury-Jones, Sambrook and Irvine (2011); Melincavage (2011); Morris and Stew (2013); Del Prato (2013)

7 CONCLUSIONS

This phenomenological study has highlighted how work-placement assessment is intended as a presence by undergraduate students, who are living through educational events, the events of student assessment related to a work-placement, in the context of ongoing higher educational processes. It is the claim of this study that a more clarified understanding of work-placement assessment based on a descriptive phenomenological approach, could serve the educational community in many valuable ways. As stated earlier by another phenomenological scholar (B. Giorgi, 2005), “the most powerful work in practice often seems to fall outside the official professional discourse, and outside the framework of established theories”. This applies to higher educational practices as well, including student assessment practices and work-placements. It is the other argument of this study, that a phenomenological framework to assessment, and higher educational processes in general, offers a bridging of the gap between how student assessment (and other educational) encounters and processes are understood and talked about, and the way in which they are experienced and actually practiced.

Significant implications can be identified on the basis of the presented evidence and structure in this study. It can be concluded that the essence of the lived-through educationally meaningful assessment experience, as encountered by the participants of this study, is the personal significance and motivational horizon of the acknowledgment of the self-interest, and its either more or less sufficient fulfillment. More precisely, based on the evidence presented in the raw data of this study, the intention for the fulfillment of the self-interest can be understood as the desire of the student to be in a position of obtaining self-knowledge through assessment encounters; that is, receiving information for a better understanding of the abilities⁶⁷ of the self in relation to present requirements and for further self-improvement through being assessed by the self and/or others. It can also be concluded that the acknowledgement of self-interest presents itself as the most 'foundational meaning constituent of the lived-through meaningful assessment experience, because it is the most crucial for the awakening of the student's experiential flow, and for the educational significance to announce itself in a

⁶⁷ Often defined as competencies or capabilities in the context of the more theoretical understandings of the activities assessed in professional practice (see Stone, Boud & Hager, 2011).

potentially meaningful, and positively and/or negatively related (“good” or “bad”) way. Once the awareness of the self-interest is awakened in the self, not only do the other necessary constituents of the educationally meaningful experience become possible, but also the assessment encounters during the process are experienced in relation to the self-interest.

The other essential factor is the sense of the quality of the educational and assessment environment as a whole; whether it is felt to be safe and supportive, and whether it resonates with the expectations of the student; and whether s/he feels that s/he can openly express her/his genuine needs and vulnerabilities, and that these personal issues are appropriately privileged and responded to in the process. Hence, the suggestion of the study is that whenever one encounters a student assessment situation related to a higher educational and professional practice setting, from the perspective of the student, it is ultimately self-knowledge that one is seeking. In other words, the subjective interests of the student over work-placement assessment encounters as the means of obtaining a better understanding of the abilities of the self, within the meaning horizon of the self as a student and a future professional, and its potential fulfillment, have such a strong personal and motivational character that the work-placement assessment experience as a whole takes on either a more positive or negative meaning. Educationally speaking, it can be concluded that the significance and the more positive or negative meaning of assessment, for the student, are tied to the fulfillment of the self-interest; the desire in the self for obtaining “actual” and “preparatory” self-understanding in relation to present requirements and for further learning and improvement of the self as a student and a becoming professional.⁶⁸

On the basis of the evidence presented in this study, it is concluded that, in higher educational contexts, particularly those related to periods of work-placements, within which students are studying for a profession and are being assessed by the self and others, attention should be paid to the acknowledgement of student assessment, not only as an educational phenomenon, but rather as a phenomenon of the lived world. That is to acknowledge the lived-through experience of assessment from the perspective of the experiencer, and especially from the

⁶⁸ Cf. Dall’Alba, 2009

perspective of the student. After all, it is the student who is living at the heart of the educational process, including assessment.

Based on the results of this study, a student perspective to work-placement assessment as a lifeworld phenomenon and a phenomenal given for the experiencer, and acknowledgement of the assessment process as lived and expressed by the student, requires acknowledgement of the interrelatedness of all constituents accounting for the essential structure of the lived-through experience. The potential for the actualization of the positively and/or negatively related educational meaning of assessment, according to this study, is interrelated with; the sense of resemblance of assumptions and practice, which is closely related to the sense of enhancement and support, which again is closely related to the sense of safety and openness, and the reliance on self and others, as well as to the sense of shared interests, and the sense of the challenge to assumptions and self-interest, which again presuppose the acknowledgement of the self-interest and emotional engagement. Therefore, it is the suggestion of this study that it is equally important to acknowledge all the characteristics accounting for the living through and actualization of the more positive or negative possibilities of the student assessment experience. However, this is important only if the actualization of the positive or negative meaning of assessment as an educational process is recognized as an important factor in student assessment and higher education in general, and if the acknowledgement of and the possibility of accounting for the subjective self-interest and its fulfillment is recognized as an important factor for reaching the “full” (educational) potential and meaning embedded in student assessment.

The point here is not to claim that attention in higher educational and professional practice settings, or in the interdisciplinary research field, should not be paid to the educational or assessment experiences of the instructors; for example, the lived-through experiences of teachers and workplace supervisors. On the contrary, on the grounds of the exploration of the research literature and the findings of this study, it is claimed that more attention should be paid to the reflection of the assessment practices, and making the lived experiences of all participants (students, teachers, and expert supervisors) more explicit, which has been in the scope of educational research before, in the frame of nursing education (for example Dickson et al. 2006; Shen & Spouse, 2007; Wilson, 2013). It is also suggested that more attention should be paid to the quality and continuity of communication of the lived

experiences and intended meanings, between all participants during work-placements and the higher educational process as a whole. This is closely related to: the idea of changing, widening, and sharing the internal horizons (e.g. Wenger, 1998); the idea that only then would assessment be fully acknowledged as an integral part of the educational process and its pedagogical framework (e.g. S. Poikela et al., 2009); the idea of phenomenological tact (e.g. Van Manen, 1990, 1991) and assessment (e.g. Robertson, 2005); and the idea of anticipation in a particular profession (e.g. Dall’Alba, 2009).

Based on the results of this study, whether or not one attempts precisely to practice “phenomenological tact”⁶⁹ or “phenomenological pedagogy” as such, it is suggested that attention should be paid to the experiences of the most vulnerable participants of student assessment, namely the students, particularly in the early stages of the educational process. In this way, none would feel threatened or pressurized by more knowledgeable other/s, such as their academic or workplace educators and/or more advanced peers. It is a strong suggestion of this study that students should be intentionally supported and encouraged. Thus they would feel safe and might even consider it necessary to expose their genuine feelings and vulnerabilities, particularly those experienced as delimiting or harmful (“bad” or “negative”) to learning and self-improvement, either from a short-term or long-term perspective, without fear of the consequences. That is to say that acknowledgement of mutual feedback and support systems based on continuous reflection and assessment discussion, and shared responsibility between students and educators, are vital and perhaps a necessity for the creation of educationally safe and trustworthy environments; where mistakes, misunderstandings, negative feelings and experiences, and feelings of vulnerability could be openly discussed and monitored to inform and to enhance learning and improvement of the student, and the actions of all participants within the process. Instructors who are not afraid to make mistakes or to expose their uncertainties as experts in their specialist field are an encouraging example to their students, who feel vulnerable in front of others when exposed to criticism, particularly in the early stages of the educational process.

Experienced vulnerability, however, according to the findings of this study, may be present in all stages of education, and is not related only to students in

⁶⁹ See van Manen, 1990, 1991 and Robertson, 2005.

the early stages of the educational process. Nonetheless, according to previous studies, students exposed to criticism may be most vulnerable in the early stages of education, and feel that they are being unfairly criticized, devalued, or disempowered (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2011), especially if the source of criticism is a more knowledgeable other, similar to conditions experienced between novice and expert professionals (Melincavage, 2011; Wilson, 2013). Besides, the student may not have developed sufficient skills for negotiating and communicating and making her/his needs and expectations explicit to other/s.

In this study, some of the students felt that they were being unfairly and/or over criticized, or belittled, by their workplace supervisors. Similar experiences related to a phenomenon of faculty incivility have been reported in the context of nursing education (Clark 2008; Del Prato, 2013). Furthermore, in the middle section of the education, particularly in the frame of health professions, the student may experience anxiety whilst becoming aware of the curricular expectations of increased skills and knowledge on the one hand, and the requirements within work-placements on the other (Melincavage, 2011). This may be the stage where positive acknowledgement and experiences of mutual respect and regard for others are crucial for coping and adapting to pressure (Chesser-Smyth, 2005; Bradbury-Jones et al., 2011; Wilson, 2013). Besides, feelings of uncertainty and vulnerability may still be present in the final stages of education, when students are aware of their forthcoming graduation and the expectations of working independently, as shown by the findings of this study. On one hand the student may have developed a range of appropriate coping strategies, but on the other hand, the increase in expectations and responsibilities, or apprehension about the trust placed in them by the more knowledgeable others, both contain an expectation of increasing risk exposure, and may limit the openness or willingness of the student to expose her/his uncertainties and vulnerabilities in front of the other/s. Therefore, if making and learning from mistakes is not explicitly made acceptable at all stages of education, then assessment practice may not be as capable of empowering students as many of the pedagogical 'manuals' claim.

It can be concluded that this study reveals significant insights into the educationally meaningful moments in student assessment, as lived and intended, related to work-placements by undergraduate students. It is evident from this study that there are implications: from the lived experiences of the assessment process,

and how it is present as an empirical variation of identity to an individual student, to its positively and/or negatively related educational significance, and how positively or negatively (educationally speaking) it is experienced by the student. This study reveals that, in terms of the educational meanings and implications, the overall student assessment experience related to a work-placement, as a chain of events meaningfully linked to one another, carries a great deal of personal significance to the student. However, what makes the chain of events stand out as an educationally meaningful, and positively and/or negatively related assessment experience, to the undergraduate student, may or may not be similar to what is assumed meaningful in assessment as an educational process by the educator/s (for example, academic and/or workplace supervisor/s).

Finally, it is concluded that a genuine phenomenological understanding of educational phenomena, taking into account the complex lifeworld situations where the phenomena occur, calls for persistent dialogue between educational researchers, educators, and those 'being educated', namely students, as well as those working on different aspects of phenomenology. Moreover, it is a suggestion related to the meaning of education in its most essential sense, that all participants in educational processes, including student assessment, should from time to time be called for reflective questioning with themselves and others, and that they should be deeply concerned about the essence of educational experiences. From within this framework (the totality of the attempt to account for an essential structural description, by producing phenomenological knowledge about the phenomenon of interest from an educational perspective, and by bringing into light assessment as a 'presence' for the experiencer), it can be concluded that this study offers a phenomenologically descriptive contribution to the scientific debates on student assessment, in relation to work-placements and higher educational contexts.

While the issues related to student assessment in higher education and work-placements remain complex, and a precise meaning of student assessment process is yet to come, the value of this study for policy makers (in local and wider contexts) is that it provides the means for the examination of the underlying assumptions and existing practices as well as the different dimensions of assessment to be used, as a continual process of reflection. As reforms are continuously implemented to higher educational practices in order to respond to contemporary and future challenges all over the world, they often lead to changes

and new pedagogical innovations in the degree programs and course curricula. These changes, again, may result in new and perhaps unpredictable challenges for educational practice, including assessment, and those living through educational processes. Therefore, it is the final suggestion of this study that, for the development of a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of interest within the interdisciplinary research field, all of the dimensions of student assessment need to be studied, and that is why engagement and understanding as well as discussion and critique of the different research methodologies based on different philosophies are needed.

8 REFLECTIONS OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

This study aimed to produce phenomenological, scientific knowledge and new insights into work-placement assessment, by means of essential structural description, and regarding assessment as a lifeworld phenomenon, and as a 'given' for the experiencer. The essential structural description of a phenomenon, in this study, is based on Edmund Husserl's view of phenomenology as a descriptive science based upon intuitions of concrete 'givens', and to Amedeo Giorgi's modification of the phenomenological method as eidetic discoveries of invariant structure/s that can comprehend multiple situations. Although Husserl's focus was in philosophical transcendental analysis and he sought essences via the method of free imaginative variation, it is assumed that his ideas of the phenomenal world and phenomenological essences offer a solid base for the methodical aims of this study: describing the contents of the concrete experiences of others as lived experiential meanings, seeking the structure of the lived-through experiences through determination of the most invariant and eidetic level meanings that belong to that structure, and making the study systematic and rigorous.

Since this study aims to be both phenomenological and scientific, it tries to meet two sets of criteria. Therefore, to say that the knowledge gained in this study is scientific, is to claim that it meets the general criteria of scientific knowledge, and to say that the knowledge is new or offers new insights for understanding student assessment as a lifeworld phenomenon and as a presence for the student, is to claim that there currently is no descriptive phenomenological research within the field of (higher) education that documents lived experiences of student assessment similarly to this research. Against this framework, the totality of the attempt to account for an essential structural description, in producing phenomenological scientific knowledge about the phenomenon of interest, from an educational perspective, and in bringing into light assessment as a presence for the student, is reflected upon next.

8.1 SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE EVALUATION

The general intention that is in common for all science is to establish the most stable knowledge possible about the phenomena of the world. However, since the

phenomena of the world - as well as the objects of research - are so varied, different research methods and strategies are needed in science, to come up with its hierarchically arranged knowledge. It has been pointed out by human scientists (see van Manen, 1990; A. Giorgi, 1985, 2000b, 2009) that there are significant differences between the quality of human phenomena and the phenomena of nature. Hence, one might expect to find some differences in the practice of science when dealing with humans, when compared to the phenomena of nature. Along with the different variations of scientific research, one can also find varying definitions of the criteria for evaluating scientific knowledge. In order to evaluate the attempt to produce scientific knowledge, in this study, the exposition provided by Giorgi is adopted. For Giorgi (see A. Giorgi, 1997, 240-241, 2009, 110-112), scientific knowledge is knowledge that is: general, systematic, critical, and methodical.

Thus, to say that the knowledge gained in this study is general is to claim that it has applicability to situations other than the one in which the knowledge was obtained. It means that generality of the knowledge attained, in this study, would apply to context-similar situations; if not to 'lived experiences' in all kinds of (higher) educational and professional practice settings, presumably more so within the work-related contexts of other undergraduate physiotherapy programs, and/or the (higher) educational and problem-based pedagogical programs of other health professions. However, no claims of the universality of the findings are presented in this study. That is so because the role of context, in general, is too dominant in the human world (see A. Giorgi, 2009, 111). This means that the lived-through experiences under investigation are considered as 'parts' (or moments by Husserl) interconnected with other parts, which are dependent upon the specifying characteristics of contexts - namely the presuppositions brought into play by the individual students (the horizontal characteristics of their experiences, as well as the socio-cultural factors accepted by individual students), and too determined by the educational interests (in the sense of a chosen research perspective) to ever arrive at universal epistemological claims. Nevertheless, the chosen disciplinary perspective, the context of the lived situation, and the type of generic phenomenon being studied all place constraints on the generalization (see A. Giorgi, 2009, 102).

As pointed out by Giorgi (2009, 111), in order to obtain universality, one would have to abstract to a level so high that the disciplinary value of the experiences would be transcended. Indeed, in this study it is the educational perspective on the

phenomenon of interest which is posited first, and then the essence of the phenomenon is sought. That is why the universal essence was not considered to be the best way of presenting the results. Therefore, the structure of the phenomenon of interest, in this study, is 'general' in the sense that the findings transcend the situation in which they were obtained. As pointed out by Giorgi (2009, 89-90, 195-197), one could also say that an eidetic level generalization, or an eidetic discovery (that is, the object is reduced to its 'essence') is carried out in order to express the lived relationship in a more general way, but yet heightening the researcher's grasp of what is taking place from the chosen disciplinary perspective. That is, because imaginative variation is used so that an 'eidos' (a phenomenon in the sense of a 'type' of an invariant structure) is obtained. Moreover, no claim is being made about causality between the results and the effects of the pedagogical contexts, and neither are the results as such comparable with other pedagogical practices. Instead, in this study, as an example of a limited contextual study, the importance of the communication of the results, and their methodological justifications, are being emphasized.

Generally speaking, to say that scientific knowledge is systematic, means that one expects that, over time, the different kinds of knowledge gained would have to relate to one another in a harmonious way, and to be regulated by laws, concepts, or meanings (A. Giorgi, 1997, 241). For example, if some knowledge has been gained of perception, then there should be implications for motivation, imagination, emotional life, and so on (A. Giorgi, 2009, 111). That is also why the knowledge gained in this study must be considered, whether it is in harmony or in disharmony with the knowledge gained about assessment experiences in other (higher) educational settings, or, other than educational settings, for example, therapeutic settings (cf. A. Giorgi, 1989a,b). Systematization, in this study, also relates with the harmonization of all steps of the research process, the motivation and interest of the study, the basic structure of the phenomenon under investigation and the way it can be studied, the way of obtaining the research data, the method of analysis and the way of reporting the results, as well as the methodical and methodological level justifications.

To say that scientific knowledge is critical is to claim that the knowledge gained in a study has passed through a stage of critical inquiry, both by oneself and by others (see A. Giorgi, 2009, 111). It means that the knowledge gained in this study

must withstand specific kinds of challenges, even by the researcher who is formulating the knowledge. That is to say that besides the adoption of phenomenological attitude and scientific level reduction, a critical attitude was applied by the researcher while dwelling within and reporting each stage of this research. Besides, the research process and the thesis as a whole are carefully examined and scrutinized by critical others as part of the formalities of the PhD thesis examination process, and, in this case, also as part of the formalities of an agreement between two universities, in two different countries. More generally, it means that after the research results have been published, also the members of the relevant scientific community (other researchers) have the opportunity to challenge the findings of the study.

To say that the knowledge gained in this study is methodical is to claim that a recognizable and justified method was used to come up with the findings. It means that the applied research method should be such a reasoned and regulated procedure that it could be similarly implemented by other researchers, and that the findings and the implementation of each step of the research process could be checked by others. As stated by Giorgi (2009, 112), “there are no results that are independent of methods in science” and “a procedure that only one person can utilize is not a method”. The use of methods thus clarifies the means by which the knowledge could be gained and the findings could be made more reliable. Therefore, since this study aims to be both scientific and phenomenological, the evaluation of the study as a proper phenomenological research in the first place, concerns the legitimacy of the methodological and methodical level decisions, and their explication in the entire research process, so that a fair chance will be given for critical others to check with which aspects of the process they might disagree.

8.2 PHENOMENOLOGICAL CRITERIA FOR RESEARCH EVALUATION

The legitimacy and justification of the methodical level decisions, in this study, concern the specific characteristics of the applied phenomenological method and the steps of obtaining and analyzing the descriptive data, which are inseparable from the methodological level foundations, as well as the goals and motives of the study. According to Giorgi (2010, 19), to complete proper phenomenological research

requires a sound understanding of the so-called continental phenomenological philosophy as well as scientific research practices. It has also been addressed by Giorgi, on several occasions (see A. Giorgi, 2000a, 2000c, 2006a, 2006b, 2008, 2009), that the phenomenological method may often not only be misunderstood, particularly when judged by non-phenomenological criteria, but also misused, when philosophical phenomenology is uncritically used as the model for scientific research. It does not make the situation any less challenging, as noted by Herbert Spiegelberg (1994), the author of 'The phenomenological movement: a historical introduction', that there is not just one school of phenomenology, but instead, there is a whole range of them. That is why the researcher of this study, before making the final decisions about the research methodology, attempted to pay attention to this challenge, and tried to increase her understanding of the different traditions of phenomenological philosophy and their application in scientific research practices.

8.2.1 Legitimizing the phenomenological descriptive stance

One of the most fundamental methodological decisions made in this study related to choosing between the interpretive and the descriptive strategies in phenomenology. The situation, as it has been clarified by Giorgi (1992), concerns distinguishing between univocal and multiple meanings, and the motives behind the two different approaches: 1.) the motivation to emphasize the variations and the diversity and richness of the lived-through experiences under investigation – which would be a situation preferring the primarily interpretive (integrative) stance in phenomenology; or 2.) the motivation to articulate the relationship of the variations to the sense of identity implied in them – which would be a situation preferring the primarily descriptive (foundational) stance in phenomenology, and help to account for the very ordering of the variations. In this study, the decision was made in favour of the latter.

It was acknowledged by the researcher based on the texts of Giorgi (1992, 2009) and Mohanty (1985, 1989), that by the adoption of the descriptive phenomenological attitude - instead of the interpretive stance - and accounting for an essential structural description within the constraints of the intuitive and presentational evidence, the phenomenon of interest could be precisely and fulfillingly comprehended - instead of being accounted for as doubtful or plausible.

Hence, both the motivation to articulate the sense of identity implied in the variations of the lived-through experiences, and the belief that the unified meaning of the experience could be teased out and (should be) described, precisely as present in the experience, motivated this research, and the selection of the phenomenological descriptive perspective. While saying this, it is acknowledged that there is also obvious similarity between the two approaches.

Interpretation and description are both concerned with meanings, their discrimination and their status (A. Giorgi, 1992). In comparison with measurement, which is “the elaboration and specification of the quantitative reality, the determination of meanings is a way of penetrating and elaborating the qualitative dimensions of phenomena” (A. Giorgi, 2009, 79-80). Thus, both in the interpretive and the descriptive stances in phenomenology, meanings are considered as the established relations between an act of consciousness (“*noesis*” to Husserl) and its object (or “*noematic*” correlation), which are present to our consciousness in different moments of the experiential stream, and can aid examination of the qualitative aspects of experiential objects and the phenomena of the human lifeworld.

However, for Giorgi (1992), it is the difference between accounting for a presence based on plausibility of meaning⁷⁰ and the precision associated with the fulfillment of a demand⁷¹ that matters between the two approaches, both claiming their legitimation based on the phenomenological philosophy of science. He wants to address the difference between the conditions and motives, in which the two different approaches are appropriate: 1.) for the interpretivist, meanings are not univocal or unique, and interpretations are necessary for going beyond the data - for example, when involving pragmatic or practical concerns, and making the best interpretation possible; and 2.) the descriptive scientist, however, believes that meanings can be described in their ambiguity, complexity, multiplicity, and so on - so s/he chooses to stay with the evidence regardless of how it presents itself (A. Giorgi, 1992). It is the latter position that is taken in this study.

As stated by Giorgi (1992), for the descriptive researcher, going beyond the data, or prematurely attempting to clarify what presents itself as ambiguous, is not necessary (or even justifiable), since there is no reason why one could not describe the data in its ambiguity, incompleteness, or in its contradictory status. This

⁷⁰ According to Giorgi (1992), plausibility of meanings is inked with the interpretive stance.

⁷¹ According to Giorgi (1992), precision of meanings is linked with the descriptive stance.

study involved investigating an under-researched area, not only from the perspective of the specific research question, but also in the light of the intersection of the four areas of higher educational research within which it operates (student assessment, work-engaged learning and instruction, physiotherapy undergraduate education, and applied phenomenology), and did not involve any practical concerns for going beyond the research evidence. Thus adoption of the descriptive and, if compared to the interpretive stance, more 'foundational' stance to the research phenomenon was considered appropriate.

Another important phenomenological criterion is that all epistemological claims should be based upon the direct consciousness of the experience (A. Giorgi, 2009, 136). As pointed out by Giorgi (1992) and Mohanty (1985), the transcendental perspective to phenomenological philosophy, with regard to late Husserl, is based on the identities of meaning achieved by subjectivities in the lifeworld. It is the claim in this study, similar to that of Giorgi (1985, 1997, 2009), that the achievements of the phenomenological research process, although not having the characteristics of absoluteness or universality, still reflect a transcendental philosophy, because they, as achievements by the consciousness (by adopting the phenomenological attitude and reduction and using the signifying-fulfilling-identifying acts), are based upon the direct consciousness of the experienced given, precisely as given to the consciousness of the researcher.

It has been stated that interpretation is necessary because of the unconscious, and because humans are selfinterpreting beings (Packer, 1985), and that based on Heidegger's (1962) theory of meaning, all meanings are by definition interpretations. Giorgi's (1992) argument is that there are other theories of meaning, for instance Husserl's theory of meaning, and that in situations where an appeal is made to the unconscious, an appeal is still being made for the possibility of having a 'better' meaning that can be present to the consciousness. According to Giorgi it is no harder to obtain good descriptions than it is to create good interpretations, which again implies an appeal to evidence. Because of the complexity of contexts, a univocal meaning may be difficult to find, but it is the position taken by the descriptivist (as it is in this research) that all meanings being present to consciousness also can be described exactly as present, in their complexity, multiplicity, ambiguity, and so on. Hence, to argue for the possibility of evidence, in this study, is to argue for the possibility of the descriptive stance in phenomenology;

making explicit the 'identities' of meaning, achieved by the means of the acts of consciousness by subjectivities in the lifeworld, which can be communicated through language, and also be examined by other subjectivities.

As a summary of the chosen research perspective, the goal of attempting to account for an essential structural description of the phenomenon of interest, in this study, relates to actions and their justification within the entire research process, and making explicit each step of the process, as well as the epistemological and ontological aspects of the work. As stated above, no further epistemological claim is being made, in this research, for the identical meaning of the lived-through experiences under investigation, other than that it is implied in the variations themselves, and that rendering it explicit is a clarifying and useful task. Another important phenomenological criterion also implied above is that all epistemological claims should be based upon the direct consciousness of the experience. Hence, although the original experience of the phenomenon of interest comes from other persons, it is believed that this phenomenological claim, in the spirit of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, is met in this study, because all of the analyses and the intuitions described are given directly to the consciousness of the researcher. It is also claimed that the data analyses were conducted with an intersubjective attitude, since it was ensured that other researchers should be able to access the transformations lived through by the researcher based upon the evidentiary traces that are left in the detailed presentation of the different stages of the research process.

8.2.2 Limitations of this phenomenological study

Based on the methodological decisions presented above, it is also acknowledged that there are some limitations to this research and its methodological approach. Work-placement assessment as a lived-through experience, in this study explicates how assessment related to a supervised work-placement setting is present as intended meanings and their various combinations to undergraduate students. This idea of intentionality, or the directedness of the acts of consciousness toward objects, is based on Husserl's (1983) theory of "noetic-noematic correlation"; that is, the relationship between those two (the act/noesis and its content/noema). It is the

articulation of this relationship, within the framework of consciousness and a lived-through experience, that raises the possibility of entering into the experience of another, and exhibiting the parts of the experience and the lived meanings contained in those parts, which are the focus of the descriptive task precisely as present in the experience. Hence, concrete descriptions of the phenomenon of interest were first obtained from participants, and after transcribing the verbal reports, the descriptions were analyzed and described by the researcher. The transcribed verbal reports were understood as expressions depicting the experiential world of the describer, to which the 'noetic-noematic correlation' then could be applied. During the data analyses, the verbal reports were understood to be a means by which the researcher of this study could be imaginatively present at the participant experience. In practice, the relationship between the act of the describer and the object that was correlated with it, were temporarily kept apart while being analyzed and described.

It was thus assumed that the means of adopting the phenomenological attitude and reduction towards description, in this study, would lead the researcher to the 'inner' meaning dimensions of the experience of another, which would be transformed by the researcher into the more 'generalized' meanings, revealing the situation 'as it is' for the experiencer, but also revealing the 'essential' from such descriptions. However, it was also acknowledged by the researcher that the everyday lifeworld is always richer and more complex than the adopted disciplinary perspective, and that the description of the direct experience could just as easily lend itself to another type of disciplinary analysis, depending upon the motive and interest, and the adopted research perspective. Hence, by adopting an educational perspective, and thus a 'special set' toward the descriptions of the lived-through experiences, the researcher operated within the assumption that the perspective had to be constituted by the consciousness of the researcher. Therefore, to 'adopt a set', in this study, means to set some limits on the analysis and to thematize only a particular aspect of a more complex reality.

There are two other limitations that have been pointed out by Giorgi and Giorgi (2008), which relate to the use of the descriptive phenomenological method. The first limitation is that if a phenomenon or experience cannot be described, it cannot be analyzed. In this study, the preliminary research interest was to find out how work-placement assessment was experienced by undergraduate students, and the motivation of the research was to make explicit the basic meaning of what the

students had lived through, from an educational perspective. While obtaining the descriptions of the phenomenon of interest from the participants of this study, the researcher was aware of her concerns about the research phenomenon being too abstract and the descriptions obtained from participants being too general. However, after transcribing and analyzing the data, it became clear that although the participants sometimes struggled to describe their concrete experiences of assessment in relation to work-placement, this was not because the phenomenon was too abstract or impossible to describe, but rather because the negative experiences that they originally felt were difficult to express.

The second limitation pointed out by Giorgi and Giorgi (2008), is that the phenomenological method is very labour intensive and time consuming, since living with the data in order for intuitions to arise, as well as producing the results, takes time and effort. This was apparent in this study also, where the researcher spent several months and many labour intensive hours working to analyze and reanalyze the data, and documenting the outcomes from the different steps of the process. Subsequently, the method was not treated lightly by the researcher at any stage of the process. The demands are made clear in the epistemological claims which justify the use of phenomenological descriptive analysis, that the results of the analysis reflect a careful description of the features of the experienced phenomenon, precisely as present in the descriptions to the consciousness of the researcher. This implies that no speculative or non-given factors should be allowed to influence the research findings. However, other researchers need to be able to check the findings, and how they were formulated. Since scientific findings can only become stronger by such a “give-and-take”, the critical others are invited to check the findings afterwards (see A. Giorgi, 2009, 130-131). The researcher of this study continuously reminded herself of this demand.

Keeping the above limitations in mind, the researcher of this study attempted to analyze and to describe the obtained raw data within the phenomenological attitude and reduction as systematically and as rigorously as possible and making each step of the analysis process as transparent as possible. Applying the “noetic-noematic” relation to the concrete descriptions, and delineating the parts of the experience and the lived meanings precisely, as present in the experience, makes the reading and following of the analysis process as well as the description of the results demanding and time consuming for the reader. However,

without making explicit all the methodological and methodical level decisions, and their practical applications, in each step of the research, it would not be possible to make the whole process as transparent as required. The general expectation of the above mentioned science is that it should be possible for other researchers to repeat and evaluate each methodical step of the research process. From the phenomenological research perspective, delineating and making explicit the meaning units, and providing both the track record of the process of the transformations of sense as well as the move from the transformations to the structure, makes it possible to oversee and evaluate the analysis process performed by the primary researcher. This is possible because of Husserl's claim, that what can be intuitively presented can also be carefully described (A. Giorgi, 2009, 106).

8.2.3 Validity and reliability of the phenomenological research

As noted by Giorgi (2002), a logical-empirical philosophy of science and the so-called "mainstream paradigm" of natural sciences both underlie the rationale for using the concepts of validity, reliability, and verification in the western tradition of science. However, when dealing with human phenomena and applying the phenomenological (and qualitative) research approach to education as a human science, one encounters the question of whether or not the same terms should or can have the same meaning in that context. For Giorgi (1985, 14), phenomenological procedure is the practice of science within the context of discovery rather than in the context of verification, which is also the position taken by this study.

For Giorgi (see A. Giorgi, 1985, 1989a), to systematize a human scientific activity within the context of discovery is to do it independently of the criteria of verification. This is so because, from a phenomenological viewpoint, the 'purely empirical' can never validate itself. Therefore, it is always an empirical 'given' within an eidetic framework that is verified, whether it presents itself to consciousness as belonging or not belonging⁷² to the same stream of consciousness as the acts themselves (A. Giorgi, 1989a, 60-88). That is why the criteria of verification, as such, may not be considered valid for the evaluation of the quality and value of

⁷² That is, in a Husserlian sense, immanent objects (for example, a memory or imagined objects) and transcendent objects (for example, cars and chairs).

phenomenological research. However, the ability to check the results of a study, or to replicate it, is a general scientific criterion, and phenomenologically grounded science accepts that criterion (A. Giorgi, 1985, 14), and that is exactly the position that is taken in this thesis, as implied above.

Within phenomenology, the goal is not to try to eliminate subjectivity, but rather to try to clarify the role of subjectivity when knowledge is attained. Therefore, it is accepted that both valid knowledge and errors exist in our everyday understanding. The point is, nonetheless, to try to understand the situations and the conditions in those situations in which 'valid' or 'correct' knowledge can be obtained. Thus, within a phenomenological approach to science, knowledge, as a phenomenon in the world, is strictly related to subjectivity, and cannot be separated from it. So, the question for a phenomenologist is, when does a person apprehend a phenomenon exactly as it is present, as a 'given', and when does s/he distort it because of 'over imposing' subjectivity on it, or because she has an insufficient grasp, having been inattentive or not sufficiently present. The former would be 'valid' knowledge and the latter two would be 'invalid' (A. Giorgi, 2002, 8-9).

Thus validity, according to Giorgi (2002), does not have the same role within the phenomenological philosophy of science as it has within the so-called "mainstream" research paradigm and logical-empirical philosophy. Phenomenology, as a study of phenomena as presences to consciousness, would explore any object/s whatsoever directly as lived and experienced by the individual going through that experience. Moreover, within a phenomenological descriptive approach to science, the goal is to arrive at a structural understanding of specific and concrete experiences by being fully and attentively present to situations where the desired experiences take place (A. Giorgi, 1997). As pointed out by Giorgi (2002), when compared to a test situation, the phenomenological descriptive researcher seeks situations which are as faithful as possible to the situations the researcher is trying to understand, and comes up with structures that tell her/him how, exactly, the persons lived through the situations. Hence, the researcher would not create tests, but instead would study actual situations. Thus, there would be no issue of the 'validity' of a testing situation in relation to the actual lived situation. Instead, the validity question for a phenomenological researcher would be, how valid is the knowledge gained from a phenomenological perspective?

For Husserl, the grounds for achieving validity are in rationality and the specific acts of consciousness. Husserl (1970) speaks of *signifying*, *fulfilling*, and *identifying* acts, which should be understood as processes that happen over time (A. Giorgi, 2002). For Husserl, *signifying acts* are the basis for the constitution of meaning, and these acts orient our consciousness towards the world. *Fulfilling acts*, then relate various types of sensory or symbolic fulfilment to the signifying acts, which by nature are 'empty acts', and merely mean or intend toward something. Fulfilling acts thus 'fill' the meaning intending acts (that is, the signifying acts) with authentic and symbolic 'material', which may or may not match the meaning (emptily intended but not fulfilled) of the signifying act. By 'authentic', Husserl means something that can be 'fully intuited'; by 'symbolic' he means that which 'cannot be fully presented'. Thus, still another act of consciousness is needed to confirm whether or not the fulfilling material matched the meaning of the signifying acts, namely the *identifying acts*. When the match is essentially correct, an act of identification takes place. As pointed out by Giorgi (1987), when the fulfilling material does not match the meaning of the intending act, identity will not take place. Thus, for Husserl, validity is achieved when an act is experienced wherein the fulfilling material matches the signifying meaning precisely, and if these identifying acts could be performed consistently, then one would have reliability as well (A. Giorgi, 2002).

Thus, it is this part of Husserl's theory of meaning and his theory of knowledge which are both critical for understanding the basis of the phenomenological descriptive method, and the use of imaginative variation based on signifying-fulfilling-identifying acts of consciousness. As pointed out by Giorgi (2002), what Husserl talks about is a unity of identification that synthesizes the various profiles of a given object, and as long as the profiles synthesize harmoniously and coherently, one perceives a more integrated presentation of the object. The sense that guides the sequence of profiles either becomes filled and more integrated, or else the guiding sense collapses, and has to be redirected because subsequent profiles do not fulfil the anticipated profile. Hence, it is the sense of the whole with its internal horizons of anticipations which is guiding the integrated synthesis. The phenomenological analysis as an event that transcends the consciousness of the researcher, while assuming the attitude of consciousness of a researcher, also implies that others should be capable of the same discriminations. That is why

making each step of the phenomenological method transparent, in this study, is also acknowledged as a necessity for the inter-subjective validity of the research findings.

One of the critical points in Husserl's theory of knowledge is operating within the phenomenological reduction, based on the use of the method of imaginative variation and the conscious signifying-fulfilling-identifying acts, as a basis for making strong knowledge claims. The epistemological claim thus is that the phenomenological results reflect a careful description of precisely the features of the experienced phenomenon as they were 'given' (that is, presented themselves) to the consciousness of the researcher (A. Giorgi, 2009, 130-131). In Husserl's view, the objects of knowledge are not transformed by the act of knowing (A. Giorgi, 2002). Hence, the object when appropriately 'given' is in itself as we intend it to be. Knowledge, thus, is not a modifying but an apprehending function, and nothing stands in the way of comparing the object with our thought of it, and intending them to agree (or not). Giorgi's (2009) claim is that the descriptive phenomenological method implements this strategy. Therefore, phenomenological (and qualitative) research based on Husserl's view, in seeking the meaning of experiences, poses no special 'threat' to the advancement of science, because meanings can be 'objectively' discriminated (A. Giorgi, 2002). Indeed, it is an extension of the very spirit of science. But its legitimation is better understood from the perspective of a phenomenological philosophy of science rather than an empirical one. Although operating within the scientific reduction, philosophically speaking, is not as radical as the transcendental reduction, it is a legitimate use of the term phenomenological, since "Husserl did desire that philosophy should become a rigorous science, and so he was always concerned with the formulations of scientific and theoretical knowledge" (A. Giorgi, 2009, 11).

Although the original experience under examination in this study came from another, it was assumed that the phenomenological claim was met, because all of the analyses were given directly to the consciousness of the researcher. Another claim is that the phenomenological analyses by the researcher were conducted with an intersubjective attitude, as it is assumed that the critical other is able to access the transformations lived through the primary researcher, and the procedures and strategies performed at each stage of the process. These claims also form the basis of the argument that scientific, phenomenological and educational knowledge is produced in this study. Instead of using self-reports, which is typical in a

philosophical tradition, concrete descriptions of experiences by others are used as the basis of the systematic and rigorous research process. The argument for the educational perspective then is that the 'educational' is given in the phenomenal world of individual experience. Therefore, the subjective characteristics and individuated experiential meanings, and their educational implications had to be reflected in this study. Furthermore, since the educational is not ready-made in the lifeworld experience, it had to be constituted by the researcher from the perspective of the disciplinary research interest. The educational aspect thus had to be "teased out" as the subjective meanings lived by the students, on the basis of their concrete descriptions, by means of the method of free imaginative variation and conscious (signifying-fulfilling-identifying) acts.

8.2.4 Implications for educational research

An empirical educational study that is guided by the Husserlian descriptive mode of phenomenological research requires new insights and new beginnings which are obtained by going 'back to the things themselves'. The employment of the descriptive phenomenological stance in the field of education thus has implications not only for what is counted as experienceable phenomena, and as a legitimate source and method for accessing and describing such phenomena precisely as experienced, but also for the position of the study in the wider scientific community. By the adoption of the descriptive stance, and the specific philosophical underpinnings of Husserl's phenomenological philosophy, one engages with a rather marginal research tradition, if compared to the methodological mainstreams, and the use of hermeneutics or interpretive approaches in phenomenology.

While operating within a phenomenological theory of science, a broadened sense of 'empirical'⁷³ objects and the approaches for studying such objects in education are required, since 'experiential' or 'lifeworld' phenomena are presences which can only appear in the consciousness of the experiencer. Phenomenology, in that sense, can be seen as 'a movement from the objective world

⁷³ The traditional empirical philosophy of science (Logical empiricism) bases its criteria for knowledge on the characteristics of real objects rather than strictly experiential ones (see A. Giorgi, 2009, 67-68).

into the subjective world of consciousness'.⁷⁴ For phenomenologists, the content of the stream of consciousness to which the meanings of all objects of experience present themselves, is not reducible to numbers or physiological functions, does not have spatial characteristics, and is not causally but relationally determined. Hence, it cannot be studied by obtaining and analyzing numerical data, testing hypotheses, and identifying causal relations and/or universal 'truths'. That is why the phenomenological stance to education converges with the qualitative research perspective, emphasizing the qualitative and contextual dimensions of educational phenomena. Within phenomenology, everything is studied from the viewpoint of subjective consciousness since nothing, including scientific knowledge, can be known or referred to without implicitly including consciousness. Moreover, the phenomenological stance to science is that it is more rigorous to acknowledge and take account of the role of consciousness than it is to ignore it or to regard it as a neutral presenter of objects (or 'givens').

The sense of the phenomenological descriptive stance to education, offers both openness and rigour, sees value in seeking the meaning of qualitative aspects of educational phenomena, supports a non-reductionistic approach, and acknowledges the non-naturalistic status of consciousness. It means that while obtaining concrete expressions of the lived-through phenomenon from participants based on their natural attitudes, the researcher regards them precisely as expressions depicting the experiential or phenomenal world of the describer, which is full of subjective presuppositions. However, different from the interpretive stances in phenomenology, the phenomenological researcher from a descriptive perspective assumes that essential structures of phenomenal givens can be accessed and described precisely as given in the experience based on eidetic intuitions.

Phenomenology as a descriptive science and as a research methodology in education also advocates a method for the discovery of the essence of the objects of experience based on "intuitions" of concrete givens. Hence, within the phenomenological descriptive stance, the essential characteristics as the most invariant structure and unifying meaning of the lived-through experiences under examination have to be intuited and described by the researcher, while being

⁷⁴ As pointed out by Spiegelberg (1994, 69-165), although Husserl's thinking underwent many shifts, phenomenology for Husserl was primarily a descriptive approach to the study of the essential structures of the acts and contents of consciousness, a study to be based not on mere empirical generalization but on the intuitive grasping of the essences of the phenomena, and his concern was mostly epistemological.

sensitive to the specific educational and research interests. That is possible by means of the phenomenological attitude and reduction, and the use of the method of free imaginative variation, based on the intentional (signifying-fulfilling-identifying) acts of consciousness. Hence, the discovery of the invariant sense of the structure of an experience is an outcome of the analytic process lived through by the phenomenological researcher, where the intuitions and analyses are given directly to the researcher's consciousness, and are described precisely as the invariant intentional object arrived at presents itself.⁷⁵

Thus, a descriptive phenomenological methodology, in terms of a subjective and contextual approach to human lifeworld phenomena, provides for a viewpoint in which there is an access to the direct educational experiences of others, using language and consciousness as the medium for accessing the situation of the other, and describing the experienced exactly as experienced. With this procedure, what finally comes into the "intuitive givenness" for the researcher requires adoption of a specific attitude and perspective and, while doing so, specific research interests are also applied. In addition, certain open-endedness then has to be maintained throughout the methodical steps, so that genuine discoveries may occur. This means that no beforehand criteria for the lived experiences under examination are posited or tested, but instead genuine discoveries of the ways in which certain situations or events are experienced as meaningful by participants are being sought from an educational viewpoint.

This specialized attitude expected from a phenomenological descriptive researcher is different from the natural attitude of the research participants. To say that the participant's attitude is regarded as natural, means to assume that while describing what s/he had recently lived through, the participant is speaking from an everyday perspective. However, in order to analyze the concrete descriptions from and within the phenomenological descriptive attitude and reduction, the researcher has to consider all objects that the participants describe as phenomenal 'givens', that is, as subjectively construed presences, fully embedded within the subjective assumptions, desires, and interpretations, within which the participant perceived and understood them. Moreover, the phenomenological descriptive scientist believes that these subjectively lived presences, and the meanings contained in those presences,

⁷⁵ This is particularly important for the criteria of a study being "phenomenological" and "descriptive" (see A. Giorgi, 2009, 136-137).

can be accessed and must be described exactly as present in the experience. However, no epistemological claims are made by the educational phenomenologist that the 'givens' exist in the 'actuality' as they are present in the experience, but what is noted is how they are present for the consciousness of the experiencer. Ontologically speaking, the consciousness of the experiencer is regarded as an existing worldly (that is, human) consciousness, and the meanings bestowed on the presences that the participants in a phenomenological study express, reflect the participant's personal, worldly subjectivity. It is through these intentional acts of the worldly subjectivity that all aspects of the educational experiences are intuited as "presences", and what can be intuited as meanings can be expressed and discovered, exactly as intuited.

Husserlian phenomenology as a philosophy, as a rigorous science, as a research methodology, and as a descriptive phenomenological method and analytic process applicable to human and social sciences, is likely to be unfamiliar to most educators and educational researchers. Yet, if one spends some time 'dwelling' with the concepts of 'consciousness', 'intentionality', 'lifeworld', 'lived experience', and 'phenomenological reduction', one may begin to understand what may have already been intuitively grasped about student centred learning and assessment environments, and the importance of understanding student experience. From a phenomenological perspective, educators and educational researchers thus need to develop skills to gain a more holistic understanding of the meaning of assessment in the varied contexts of higher education, including work-placements. To meet that need, the descriptive phenomenological approach, based on intuitive logic, in the Husserlian sense, provides a unique alternative to the hermeneutic or interpretive traditions which may be more easily accepted by scientific communities, both in the field of education and in scientific phenomenological research.

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APPENDIX A

1. Setting up the interview environment and equipment beforehand.
2. Providing a framework of the study, and the researcher's contact details, at the beginning of each interview.
3. Providing information about the ethical aspects, at the beginning of each interview.
4. Explaining the procedure of the interview situation, and the possibility for informal discussion and/or debriefing after the interview.
5. Before posing the interview question reminding that individual and faithful accounts of the participants' work-placement assessment experiences are desired, described as concretely and much in detail as possible.
6. Beginning each interview by posing a request for the participant/s: *could you please describe your experience of the assessment process related to your recent work-placement.* Allowing the participant/s to choose what situations and instances they want to bring forth.
(Following up with probes to obtain a depth of information, for example: *could you please explain what you mean by..*)
7. After each participant has nothing to add the description of the process, following with another request for the participant/s: *could you please describe some of the assessment situations related to the work-placement more in detail, and what you were going through in those situations.* Allowing the participant to choose what instances of the situation they want to bring forth
(Following up with probes to obtain a depth of information, for example: *could you please explain more concretely the course of action in that situation..*)
8. Concluding each interview and offering the possibility for more informal discussion with the participant and her/his experience of the interview.
9. Thanking all participants for the opportunity to learn from their experiences.

APPENDIX B

Interview summaries of the sixteen student participants

In step one, after obtaining the concrete description of the research phenomenon as lived through by a person, by interview, one reads through the textual expression of it, for obtaining *the sense of the whole*. As presenting all of the individual transcriptions would make the report too lengthy, the summaries of the actual work-placement assessment process each participant of this study underwent, are presented below.

(P₁) P₁ is a first year student who did her two-week work-placement at a public sector health care organization, within the instruction of one physiotherapist (as the main supervisor), and several other health care professionals at the workplace, and a physiotherapy teacher at school. After being asked by the interviewer to describe her experience of the student assessment process related to her recent work-placement period, P₁ clearly states that she was disappointed with the course of the work-placement and her assessment. As an example of her disappointment, P₁ cites her experience of lacking of proper assessment discussion and collaboration with workplace supervisors during the work-placement, and the focus of the work-placement being more in observation rather than in goal-oriented learning. P₁ states that no real assessment existed during the work-placement, since merely being present at the workplace was the only requirement to pass the work-placement successfully. P₁ states that since she was lacking of relevant feedback about her skills and actions at the workplace, she also was not able to compare her own observations with the supervisors' feedback, which she felt frustrating. P₁ clearly states that being told by the main supervisor, at the end of the work-placement, that everything 'went alright' was not relevant feedback to her. P₁ states that writing about her own expectations, and whether they actualized or changed during the work-placement, in a learning assignment that they were given from school, was not proper assessment to her either. As an example of acquiring some relevant feedback about her skills and actions, P₁ cites a situation, when she was told by one of the other supervisors (and not by the main supervisor) that she seemed to know what she was doing with patients. P₁ felt that it gave her some assurance of her capability and being on-track. P₁ clearly states that she felt frustrating not being able to benefit from the work-placement and its assessment practice, in the best possible way. P₁ states that she was not only lacking of joint exploration of goals and expectations with the main supervisor, in the beginning of the placement, but also accurate information about the course of her actions; whether she was doing things right or wrong and how to do things better, and whether her skills and actions were in line with the study phase; and thus was also lacking of information that she needed for further self-improvement. When being asked by the interviewer about the joint reflection of the work-placement with teacher and peers at school, after the work-placement, P₁ states that it was on a very general level and thus felt mainly boring. P₁ states that teachers in general cannot have a full picture of what their students are doing at the workplace, since they spend most of their time at school. P₁ then comes to the conclusion that the goals and outcomes of the work-placement should be regarded by students and workplace supervisors. When being asked by the interviewer about her thoughts about grading, P₁ states that it was not her desire, since receiving a low grade could have decreased her motivation more before the next work-placement.

(P₂) P₂ is a first year student, who did her two-week work-placement at a public sector early childhood organization, within the instruction of one kindergarten teacher (as the main supervisor) and several other early childhood professionals at the workplace, and a physiotherapy teacher at school. After being asked by the interviewer to describe her experience of the student assessment process related to her recent work-placement period, P₂ clearly states her general satisfaction with the course of the work-placement and her own active role in the assessment process. As an example of her satisfaction P₂ cites the positive impact of her own initiatives in explaining the aim and goals of the work-placement for the main workplace supervisor, and the rest of the staff members. P₂ states that she based on her past experience acknowledged that taking an active role of self would be the best way for enhancing a shared awareness of her goals and interests at the workplace. P₂ states that she was also pleased to be able to accomplish her first work-placement near home, since moving out from home was not easy for her after a tragic incident in her life, and she still had some doubts of living by herself. As another example of her satisfaction, P₂ cites the use of online tools for communication during the work-placement. P₂ states that a joint web-conference meeting was a good substitute for a face-to-face communication between all parties (P₂ and the main supervisor at the workplace and the teacher at school) during the work-placement. P₂ states that being able to see the teacher via web-camera was important because she was not familiar with the teacher before, and the teacher was not able to visit at the workplace. P₂ states that during their online meeting, the general goals of the work-placement were explored, and she was able to share her experiences about the work-placement so far. As another example of the use of the online tools P₂ cites her mainly positive experience of peer feedback. P₂ states that although she generally acknowledged her needs for learning and improvement, she was pleased with the online feedback she received from peers about her learning goals, and the learning assignment they were given from school. As an example of her less positive experience P₂ cites her lack of feedback. P₂ states that although she every now and then asked feedback from the supervisors, they mostly gave her only positive but not very accurate or critical feedback about her skills and actions, or the things that she needed to improve. P₂ then states that she could have been more active herself, and have some variation in asking feedback from the supervisors, and that she needed to improve her skills in that too, in the future. When being asked by the interviewer about the final assessment situation at the workplace, P₁ states that it was still ahead, since P₂ and her main supervisor both had been ill on the very last day of the placement period. For the same reason P₂ also didn't participate in the joint reflection at school, organized after the work-placement.

(P₃) P₃ is a first year student, who did his two-week work-placement at a private sector health care organization, within the instruction of one physiotherapist (as the main supervisor) and several other health care professionals at the workplace, and a physiotherapy teacher at school. After being asked by the interviewer to describe his experience of the student assessment process related to his recent work-placement period, P₃ states that although the first work-placement as a whole offered an authentic learning site that he had been waiting for, he was mainly disappointed with the course of his assessment during the work-placement. As an example of his disappointment, P₃ cites his experience of lacking of opportunities for joint exploration of his goals and achievements at the workplace. Besides, P₃ states that most of all he was lacking of collaboration with the main supervisor. Another example of his disappointment is the lack of feedback, or assessment discussion in general, about the course of his actions

that he desired with his supervisors. P₃ clearly states that he strongly questioned the rationale for the assessment practice of his first work-placement, that no requirements other than being present at the workplace was needed to pass the placement successfully. P₃ states that based on the orientation at school, and his own assumption, he expected that his capability to meet the workplace requirements and act accordingly would have been taken into account in assessment. P₃ clearly states that besides desiring for positive feedback and encouragement from the supervisors, during his first work-placement, he also expected critical feedback about the course of his actions, but was lacking of both. P₃ states he felt frustrated, at the end of the work-placement, while he was assessed by the main supervisor, and not by other professionals with whom he was working most of time. P₃ states that since he was not assessed on the grounds of his skills and actions, he feels that the situation didn't really enhance his learning or motivate him for further improvement. As an example of receiving some feedback about his skills and actions, during the work-placement, P₃ cites the positive feedback he received from his patients about his manual skills, that he felt comforting. When being asked by the interviewer about his thoughts about grading, P₃ clearly states that it was not his desire, since grading of the first work-placement would not have been relevant. After listening to his peer's (P₁) comments in the interview, about the learning assignment they were given from school (writing about their own expectations, and whether they actualized or changed during the work-placement), P₃ states that he felt quite differently from P₁ and thought that something similar could have been in more formal use for self-assessment, during the work-placement. When being asked by the interviewer about the joint discussion with the teacher and peers at school, after the work-placement, P₃ states that he did not participate, but he did not give any explanation.

(P₄) P₄ is a first year student, who did her two-week work-placement at a public sector health care organization, within the instruction of one physiotherapist (as the main supervisor) and several other health professionals at the workplace, and a physiotherapy teacher at school. After being asked by the interviewer to describe her experience of the student assessment process related to her recent work-placement period, P₄ states that although she perceived the work-placement as an appropriate and necessary learning site, she felt mainly disappointed with the course of her assessment. As an example of her disappointment, P₄ cites her experience of lacking of time and opportunities for joint exploration of her goals and actions at the workplace. P₄ states that most of all she was disappointed with the limited time spent on collaboration and assessment discussion with the workplace supervisor. P₄ states that the poor investment of the main supervisor on student feedback, or discussing about P₄'s skills and actions in general, limited her possibilities for learning and self-improvement. As another example of her disappointment, P₄ cites her experience of the lack of feedback from her peer (nurse) student related to a shared assignment that was given from school. P₄ states that since she was putting a lot of time and effort on the assignment, and commenting the work of the peer student online, she felt frustrating that the peer paid very little attention to hers. P₄ states, however, that some problems existed in the virtual learning environment which may have limited the responses from the peer student, who was doing her placement period in another workplace. As an example of receiving some assurance for self, P₄ cites the positive impact of observing the work of the other professionals (nurses) and reflecting her own actions. P₄ states that by observing the work of others and trying to learn from the course of their actions, she acknowledged some improvement in her actions, and felt less uncertain afterwards. P₄ states, however, that listening to the experiences of her

peer students at school, after the work-placement, made her feel envious and even more frustrated with her own placement period, and the lack of opportunities for learning and self-improvement through active co-operation with the workplace supervisor/s.

(P₅) P₅ is a second year student, who did her five-week work-placement at a private sector health care organization within the instruction of one physiotherapist at the workplace, and a physiotherapy teacher at school. After being asked by the interviewer to describe her experience of the student assessment process related to her recent work-placement period, P₅ clearly states that she was mainly disappointed with the course of the work-placement and its assessment practice, and especially the actions of the workplace supervisor. As an example of the disappointment, P₅ cites her experience of lacking of relevant feedback and a proper acknowledgement of her goals and achievements by the workplace supervisor. P₅ states that the course of her actions was not properly assessed by the supervisor, at any stage of the work-placement. P₅ states that during the work-placement she felt that the supervisor mainly emphasized the mistakes and limitations in her skills and actions, while praising the superiority of her peer student (who did her placement at the same workplace), and by doing so, lessened the value of the few positive feedback that was given to P₅. P₅ states that the course of the actions of the supervisor lowered her motivation to ask more advice or feedback from the supervisor, and, hence, also limited her opportunities for learning and improvement during the work-placement. P₅ states that although she felt that she was able to notice her own improvement to some extent, she felt lacking of approval and acknowledgement from the expert supervisor. As another example of the lack of relevant feedback, P₅ cites the situation of not receiving critical feedback about her case report from the teacher until after its completion. P₅ states, however, that she felt the teacher's comments generally encouraging. As another example of her disappointment, P₅ cites the final assessment situation at the end of the work-placement, organized together with the teacher, the workplace supervisor, and her peer student. P₅ states that the assessment situation mainly consisted of a generic level discussion otherwise, but only herself being negatively appraised and belittled by the supervisor, who again compared P₅ with her peer student, and praised the superiority of the peer. P₅ states that she felt disappointing that the teacher and her peer student were not defending her in the situation in any way, because she felt not being able to defend herself. P₅ states that she deliberately avoided confrontation with the supervisor because of fearing its consequences on her final grade. After being asked by the researcher about her experience of the joint reflection at school, after the placement, P₅ states that she didn't participate in the joint reflection because she felt not being able to share her experience of the work-placement, nor express her true feelings, in front of the teacher and her peers.

(P₆) P₆ is a second year student, who did her three-week work-placement with another student at a public sector health care organization, within the instruction of two physiotherapists at the workplace, and a physiotherapy teacher at school. After being asked by the interviewer to describe her experience of student assessment related to her recent work-placement period, P₆ states that although she somewhat struggled with the creation of her learning goals before and at the beginning of the work-placement, she was generally satisfied with the course of the work-placement and her assessment, and having another student at the same workplace. P₆ states that she felt more satisfied with her own efforts afterwards, when being greeted by others that she had been able to create concrete and achievable learning goals. As an example of her general

satisfaction P₆ cites the course of action of the main workplace supervisor. P₆ states that, throughout the work-placement, besides giving her plenty of time for preparations and planning, the supervisor also gave her a lot of useful feedback about her skills and actions at the workplace. P₆ states that the supervisor also gave her a lot of responsibility, and possibilities to work alone with patients, but expected that she first presented her action plans for the supervisor, before each patient situation, made changes based on the supervisor's feedback, and again discussed about the course of her actions afterwards with the supervisor. However, P₆ perceived the course of action of her two workplace supervisors differently. P₆ felt that the other physiotherapist, with whom she spent less time during the work-placement, did not pay similar attention to her needs and interests or give much feedback about her skills and actions. As another example of her general satisfaction P₆ cites the positive support she during the placement received from teacher and peer students. P₆ felt that the teacher's online comments helped her in the creation of the concrete and achievable learning goals, and the collaboration with the peers online, gave her assurance of being on-track. P₆ states that she also received much useful feedback about her actions from her peer student, who was at the same workplace. P₆ states that, at the end of the work-placement, she was mainly pleased with the final assessment situation, feeling that it was based on mutual assessment discussion between her and the main supervisor, both giving and receiving feedback from each other for further improvement. When being asked by the supervisor about her thoughts of grading P₆ states that it was not her desire. However, P₆ the states that, at the end of the work-placement, she desired but was lacking of accurate information about the level of her skills and actions related to the phase of her studies. After being asked by the interviewer about the joint reflection at school, after the work-placement, P₆ states that she did not participate because of being sick.

(P₇) P₇ is a second year student, who did her five-week work-placement at a private sector health care organization, within the instruction of one physiotherapist at the workplace, and a physiotherapy teacher at school. After being asked by the interviewer to describe her experience of the student assessment process related to her recent work-placement period, P₇ states that she felt mainly disappointed with the course of the work-placement and its assessment practice. As an example of her disappointment, P₇ cites the emphasis of assessment being more in self-assessment rather than in being assessed by the instructors. P₇ states that she perceived assessment of her own skills and actions generally frustrating, and as an ineffective form of assessment. As another example of her disappointment, P₇ cites her experience of lacking of accurate and direct feedback about her skills and actions from both of her instructors (teacher and workplace supervisor). P₇ states that most of all she was lacking of timely criticism, whether her actions were right or wrong, and how to do improve her skills and actions. P₇ then states that she felt that the teacher merely relied on student self-assessment, and gave her almost entirely positive but not particularly meaningful feedback. P₇ states that the only negative feedback from the teacher related to case report (a learning assignment given from school), which was not given to her until the report had already been graded. This was frustrating to P₇. P₇ also states that besides lacking of feedback, she felt that during the work-placement she was not required enough by either one of the instructors, which also diminished her motivation and opportunities for learning and self-improvement. As another example of her negative experience, P₇ cites the final assessment situation at the end of the placement, which was arranged together with the teacher and the supervisor, and another student who did her placement at the same workplace. P₇ states that while the teacher almost entirely

relied on student self-assessment, the feedback P₇ and her peer student received from both instructors, was almost entirely positive, and appraising more their commonalities than their individual skills or actions. Although acknowledging the lack of relevant feedback that she desired from both instructors, P₇ states that she tried to avoid open confrontation especially with the workplace supervisor, whose sister (also being a workplace supervisor) she knew being strongly criticized by other students. After being asked by the interviewer about the joint reflection at school with the teacher and peers, after the work-placement, P₇ states that she did not find it particularly meaningful to her.

(P₈) P₈ is a second year student, who did his three-week work-placement at a public sector health care organization, within the instruction of several physiotherapists at the workplace, and a physiotherapy teacher at school. After being asked by the interviewer to describe his experience of the student assessment process related to his recent work-placement period, P₈ states that although he perceived his last work-placement as an accurate continuum for practical training at school, he was not entirely satisfied with the course of the work-placement or his assessment. As an example of his dissatisfaction, P₈ cites the lack of connection between his learning goals and his daily actions at the workplace. P₈ states that too much time and effort was paid for the creation of the learning goals, since the workplace supervisors did not pay much attention to his written goals and interests until the very end of the work-placement. P₈ states that daily situations at the workplace defined his actions and the content of his learning more than his learning goals. This was frustrating to him. As another example of his dissatisfaction P₈ cites the lack of direct feedback from the supervisors. P₈ states that although he was pleased with being treated as a trustworthy colleague, and having a clear timetable and responsibilities with his own patients, he was lacking of direct and critical feedback about his skills and actions. As another example of his satisfaction, P₈ cites the support he received from the main supervisor in writing his case report, the assignment they were given from school. P₈ states that the supervisor first organized a suitable patient case, and later commented his writing. P₈ also implies to his general satisfaction with the final assessment situation at the workplace. P₈ states that the situation was organized around mutual assessment discussion between him and the main supervisor, and consisted of P₈'s own self-assessment and the supervisor's feedback, verbally and in writing. P₈ states that although he received much positive feedback and assurance for his own observations from the supervisor, he was still lacking of more accurate and critical feedback about the course of his actions for further self-improvement. P₈ then explicitly states that he too could have been more active himself, in asking more feedback about his skills and actions from the supervisors. After being asked by the interviewer about the joint seminar-day and reflection at school, after the placement, P₈ states that it was not particularly interesting to him. P₈ then states that he valued the teacher's role most in organizing the learning tasks and the general focus of the work-placements.

(P₉) P₉ is a third year student, who did her five-week work-placement at a public sector health care organization, within the instruction of two physiotherapists at the workplace, and a physiotherapy teacher at school. After being asked by the interviewer to describe her experience of the student assessment process related to her recent work-placement period, P₉ clearly states that she was generally satisfied with the course of her work-placement and its assessment practice. As an example of her satisfaction P₉ cites the positive impact of her own decisions and deliberate actions, in choosing the work-placement and the learning assignment related to the placement, according to her own interests. P₉ states

that being able to choose the special area she was interested in, and writing a learning diary instead of a case report, enhanced her motivation for learning and self-assessment throughout the work-placement. P₉ felt that writing about her experiences and daily patient situations at the workplace, enhanced her understanding and (self-) assessment of her own actions. P₉ states that written exploration of the goals, actions, and achievements of self, made her own learning and improvement during the work-placement more concrete and visible, and also enhanced her self-assessment, at the end of the work-placement. As another example of the positive impact of her own initiatives, P₉ cites her deliberate actions in asking feedback from the work-place supervisors. P₉ states that, based on her previously negative experiences of not receiving relevant feedback from instructors, she asked both of her workplace supervisors to give her immediate feedback about her skills and actions, from the very beginning of the placement period. P₉ states that based on her request the supervisors gave her a lot of constructive feedback, and continuously asked about her needs and expectations during the placement. P₉ states that nobody had previously paid so much attention to her needs. As another example of her general satisfaction with the assessment practice, P₉ cites the positive impact of the continuous exploration of her goals and actions, and achieved outcomes, with all the instructors. P₉ states that, at the end of the work-placement, her original grade (the second best) suggested by the workplace supervisors, was changed to the highest due to the remarks of the teacher about her learning outcomes, during the work-placement. P₉ states that without the teacher's presence the grade probably would not have been changed. P₉ states, however, that it was more important to her to receive feedback about her skills and actions from the expert physiotherapists than from the teacher, in building up her professional competence. After being asked by the interviewer about the joint reflection at school with the teacher and peers, after the work-placement, P₉ states that she did not find it particularly meaningful.

(P₁₀) P₁₀ is a third year student, who did her six-week work-placement at a public sector health care organization, in a foreign country, within the instruction of several physiotherapists at the workplace, and one physiotherapy teacher at her home school, and another at the exchange partner school. After being asked by the interviewer to describe her experience of the student assessment process related to her recent work-placement period, P₁₀ states that, at the beginning of the work-placement, she felt mainly disappointed with the course of the actions of her supervisors that she felt clashing with her own expectations. As an example of her disappointment, P₁₀ cites the lack of feedback about her goals and actions at the workplace, while the supervisors expected her to be able to work independently. P₁₀ states that, at the beginning of the work-placement, she felt that she merely received delayed or very general level feedback about her actions, and was not able to link the feedback with concrete situations afterwards. P₁₀ states that the situation got her alarmed, whether she would receive enough feedback or supervision during the work-placement for learning and improvement. P₁₀ states that a change for better occurred after she began to ask more feedback about her actions from the supervisors. P₁₀ states that by asking feedback to her action plans before their execution, she also received more timely and accurate supervision from the supervisors. P₁₀ states, however, that some of the supervisors expressed their annoyance with her requests, and expected her to manage things more independently. P₁₀ states that although she believed that she was able to recognize when she needed help or advice, she expected that the supervisors would sometimes give her feedback without asking. As another example of her disappointment, P₁₀ cites her negative experience of the final assessment situation at the workplace. P₁₀ states that she

perceived herself lacking of a proper discussion with the supervisors about her goals and outcomes. As an example of another positive experience, P₁₀ cites the online discussions with her (home school) teacher. P₁₀ states that besides being able to share her negative work-placement experiences with the teacher, she felt that the teacher gave her the support that she was missing at the workplace, particularly at the beginning of the work-placement. P₁₀ states that the support she received from the peer student (P₁₂), with whom she shared her accommodation during the exchange, was also important to her. After being asked by the interviewer about the role of the partner school teacher, P₁₀ states that collaboration with the partner school teacher wasn't particularly meaningful to her, since she felt that their meetings were accidental rather than planned.

(P₁₁) P₁₁ is a third year student, who did her five-week work-placement in a private sector health care organization, within the instruction of one physiotherapist at the workplace, and a physiotherapy teacher at school. After being asked by the interviewer to describe her experience of the student assessment process related to her recent work-placement period, P₁₁ clearly states that during the work-placement, she felt the course of her assessment and the actions of both of her instructors, the teacher and the workplace supervisor, merely disappointing. As an example of her disappointment, P₁₁ cites the lack of instructors' presence in important situations. P₁₁ states that because of the late change of her work-placement, she had hardly any information about the workplace beforehand, and thus felt disappointing that the teacher was not able to visit at the workplace until the second week of her work-placement, and even then visited very briefly. P₁₁ states that since the teacher clearly was in a hurry, the clarification of her goals and expectations for the work-placement was rather superficial. P₁₁ states that she also felt disappointed with the workplace supervisor's absence during the teacher's visit. As another example of her disappointment, P₁₁ cites her experience of lacking of relevant feedback about her skills and actions during the work-placement. P₁₁ states that the only feedback she received from the teacher was based on a very general level discussion about her learning goals during the teacher's visit. P₁₁ states that she strongly questioned the pedagogical competence of the workplace supervisor, who seemed to have difficulties in understanding her position as a student, and her needs for receiving relevant feedback about her skills and actions at the workplace. P₁₁ clearly states that being told that everything went alright was not meaningful feedback to her. P₁₁ also states that she was not sure whether she should take a more active or passive role at the workplace, and whether she should show her uncertainty in front of the supervisor. As an example of positive experience, P₁₁ cites her satisfaction with having another student at the same workplace. P₁₁ states that the feedback she received from her peer was more focused and useful than the feedback received from the supervisor, and that she was able to show her ignorance in front of the peer, who was not a superior to her. As another example of her negative feelings, P₁₁ also cites her disappointment with the final grade, and the absence of teacher from the final assessment situation, at the workplace. P₁₁ felt that the given grade (the second best instead of the highest marks) was ill-justified by the supervisor. After being asked by the interviewer about the joint reflection at school, after the work-placement, with teacher and peers, P₁₁ states that she did not find it particularly meaningful to her. P₁₁ states that, based on her past experiences of being unfairly questioned in front of others, she was not willing to express her true feelings or experiences, in similar situations either.

(P₁₂) P₁₂ is a third year student, who did her six-week work-placement in a private sector health care organization, in a foreign country, within the instruction of

several physiotherapists at the workplace, and one physiotherapy teacher at her home school, and another at the exchange partner school. After being asked by the interviewer to describe her experience of the student assessment process related to a recent work-placement period, P₁₂ states that, at the beginning, she was mainly disappointed with the course of the work-placement in general, and particularly with the actions of the workplace supervisors. As an example of her disappointment P₁₂ cites the lack of beforehand orientation and information about the workplace. P₁₂ states that the first meeting with the main supervisor was very short, and she was not properly introduced to other physiotherapists either. As another example of her disappointment P₁₂ cites the attitudes of the physiotherapists she was working with. P₁₂ states that she felt often being left alone without support. P₁₂ states that, at the beginning, she tried to cope within the dissatisfying situation in case she might have been tested by the workplace supervisors. P₁₂ states, however, that the situation changed for better after she decided to take a more active role and began to ask feedback from the supervisors. P₁₂ also states that the use of online technologies created an opportunity to receive advice from the teacher she was more familiar with. P₁₂ states that sharing the negative experience with her peer student (P₁₀), and receiving support from the (home school) teacher online, gave her encouragement in striving for change. P₁₂ states that although one of the workplace supervisors still gave her mainly negative feedback about her actions, she was pleased with more timely and constructive feedback she then received from other physiotherapists. As another example of her satisfaction P₁₂ cites the final assessment discussion, at the end of the work-placement. P₁₂ states, however, that while she was pleased with the assessment discussion between her and the main supervisor, she felt frustrating that her goals and outcomes had not been explored together with the supervisor until the end of the work-placement. After being asked by the interviewer about the role of the partner school teacher, P₁₂ states that occasional meetings with the partner school teacher were not particularly meaningful to her, since she felt that the teacher's focus was more in the supervision and assessment of the local students.

(P₁₃) P₁₃ is a fourth year student, who did her five-week work-placement at a private sector health care organization, within the instruction of several physiotherapists at the workplace, and a physiotherapy teacher at school. After being asked by the interviewer to describe her experience of the student assessment process related to her recent work-placement period, P₁₃ states that she was rather disappointed with the course of the work-placement and its assessment practice, in general, and felt particularly disappointed with the actions of the main workplace supervisor, with whom she had a conflicting relationship. As an example of her disappointment with the main supervisor, P₁₃ cites a situation at the beginning of the work-placement, where she felt being unfairly criticized by the main supervisor, in front of the clients. P₁₃ states that although she had to face the situation without any preparation beforehand, she nevertheless was harshly criticized about some mistakes that she found easy to correct herself. P₁₃ states that after that situation she deliberately tried to avoid any collaboration and conflicts with the main supervisor because of fearing its consequences. P₁₃ states that she was more reasonably treated by the other supervisors, who were younger and more recently graduated, and who gave her more direct and constructive feedback, but to whom she didn't completely trust either. As an example of her mistrust P₁₃ cites the hierarchical relations at the workplace, between the main supervisor and the other (less experienced) physiotherapists. P₁₃ states that the authority of the main supervisor was hardly ever questioned by others at the workplace. As another example of the supervisor's authority P₁₃ cites the final assessment situation, and her experience

of being unfairly criticized by the main supervisor, while the other physiotherapists had hardly anything to say. P₁₃ states that although she felt that received mainly positive feedback from the other physiotherapists, her grade for the work-placement was decided lower (which was the second best) by the main supervisor. P₁₃ states that based on her past experience, she did not expect much support during the work-placement from the teacher either, and thus became positively surprised during her visit. P₁₃ states that she felt relieving to be able to share her negative experiences, in the past and the present work-placement/s, without any criticism or questioning from the teacher. After being asked by the interviewer about the joint reflection at school with teacher and peers, after the work-placement, P₁₃ states that it was not particularly meaningful to her. P₁₃ then states that after her past negative experiences in similar situations, she didn't want to express her true feelings and negative experiences in front of her peers.

(P₁₄) P₁₄ is a fourth year student, who did her five-week work-placement at a private sector health care organization, within the instruction of several physiotherapists at the workplace, and a physiotherapy teacher at school. After being asked by the interviewer to describe her experience of the student assessment process related to her recent work-placement period, P₁₄ states that, although she had several supervisors during the work-placement, the situation emphasized student self-assessment. P₁₄ states that she had a lot of independent work at the workplace, and that there was no time booked separately for assessment with the supervisors. As an example of her satisfaction P₁₄ cites her experience of the positive impact of her own initiatives. P₁₄ states that because she was able to accomplish the last work-placement in the special area that she was interested in, she wanted to do her best for the advancement of her own learning and improvement in that area. P₁₄ states that she based on her past experience knew that taking an active of self was a necessity for a successful work-placement experience. P₁₄ states that she aimed for the creation of as concrete and achievable learning goals as possible, and also introduced her goals and the use of the assessment form to the supervisors, at the beginning of the work-placement. P₁₄ states that, during the work-placement, she put more time and effort on describing her learning goals and desired outcomes than ever before, P₁₄ states that she received useful comments and advice to her goals from the workplace supervisors, who also used her learning goals as the starting point of the weekly supervisory meetings. P₁₄ states that the teacher only briefly commented her learning goals online, but she based on her past experiences didn't expect much feedback from the teacher either. As another example of her satisfaction with her own active role, P₁₄ cites her initiatives in documentation. P₁₄ states that she deliberately recorded her daily actions within patient situation by writing a learning diary, and was able to benefit from her recordings when working again with the same patient and making decisions of the next therapy session. P₁₄ also states that, at the end of the work-placement, she was the one who led the final assessment discussion based on her goals and desired outcomes, and recorded both her own and the supervisors' comments in the assessment form. As another example of her general satisfaction with the assessment process P₁₄ cites the availability of the supervisors' back-up. P₁₄ states that, although there were no arrangements separately for assessment as such, during the work-placement, the supervisors were always available for discussion, and willing to answer her questions and share their expertise. P₁₄ states that, although there was an expectation of independent work at the workplace, she acknowledged that the supervisors did not assume her to manage with the patients without help or advice either. As an example of her dissatisfaction, P₁₄ cites her experience of the lack of peer-

feedback. P₁₄ states that this was her first placement without the peers' online comments, and that she missed the attention and feedback she used to receive from her peers in the past. P₁₄ also states that sharing experiences with peers also gave her assurance of being on-track. After being asked by the interviewer about the joint orientation and feedback sessions at school, before and after the placement, P₁₄ states that they had no particular meaning to her.

(P₁₅) P₁₅ is a fourth year student, who did her five-week work-placement at a public sector health care organization, within the instruction of one physiotherapist at the workplace, and a physiotherapy teacher at school. After being asked by the interviewer to describe her experience of the student assessment process related to her recent work-placement period, P₁₅ states that she was generally satisfied with the course of the work-placement and the assessment practice, although her past negative experiences were still present, at the beginning of the work-placement. As an example of her satisfaction P₁₅ cites the approving atmosphere at the workplace and the mutual relationship with the workplace supervisor. P₁₅ states that she felt being valued, not only as a student, but also as an equivalent, capable of bringing in some ideas of her own with the supervisor, without being diminished or questioned. P₁₅ then states that because she felt being valued, she also felt that she was accepted as her true self. This had not always been the case for her. P₁₅ states that, in the past, she felt that being diminished and unfairly criticized by her workplace supervisor, and felt it lessening her self-trust and willingness to express her true feelings in the following work-placements. P₁₅ states that, this time, the assessment discussion between her and her supervisor was based on continuous exploration of her goals and achievements, in a constructive manner, and that the supervisor was paying a lot of attention to her needs and expectations. P₁₅ states that receiving positive feedback about her competence from the expert supervisor also enhanced her self-trust, which had been impaired in the past. Another example of her satisfaction for P₁₅ is the positive impact of her own active role in choosing the work-placement and deciding the learning goals according to her own interest. P₁₅ states that while being able to do so, she felt being valued as an autonomous learner, capable of determining her own learning needs. However, P₁₅ states that due to her past (negative) experiences, she still desired for more active role of teachers, in protecting other students from choosing the most criticized workplaces. P₁₅ also states that although she felt that during this work-placement she communicated with the teacher less than usual, she did not feel being left alone, without the teacher's support. P₁₅ clearly states that during the work-placement she was aware of the teacher's back-up, and that she could have asked advice from either one of her instructors (the teacher or the supervisor). P₁₅ states that she was satisfied with the final assessment situation at the workplace, which primarily consisted of joint discussion related to the current work-placement, but also her past negative experiences were discussed. P₁₅ states that, in that sense, the presence of the teacher at the final assessment session was crucial to her. P₁₅ states that because of the presence and the compassionate attitude of both instructors, she felt safe to openly talk about her past negative experiences, and struggle in coping. P₁₅ states that dealing with her past negative experiences was demanding and relieving, at the same time, and that during this discussion she experienced a new (compassionate) side of the teacher, which she did not know existing. P₁₅ also states that although she was satisfied with her final grade (the highest marks) she valued her own self-assessment skills more than the grade. After being asked by the interviewer about the joint reflection with the teacher and peers at school, after the placement, P₁₅ states that it was not particularly meaningful to her, since it consisted of very general level discussion.

(P₁₆) P₁₆ is a fourth year student, who did his five-week work-placement in a private sector health care organization, within the instruction of several physiotherapists at the workplace, and a physiotherapy teacher at school. After being asked by the interviewer to describe his experience of the student assessment process related to his recent work-placement period, P₁₆ clearly states his disappointment with the course of the work-placement, and his assessment, which he did not find being congruent with his own expectations. As an example of his disappointment, P₁₆ cites the focus of the work-placement being more in independent work rather than in receiving feedback about the course of his actions. P₁₆ clearly states that while there was a lot of discussion with his supervising physiotherapists, at the workplace, he felt that he was lacking of direct feedback and discussion about the course of his actions at the workplace, and the things that he needed to improve. P₁₆ states that, during the work-placement, he somewhat questioned the generic requirement for independent work, but never openly confronted the dissatisfying situation or the main supervisor, who made the judgment about his abilities, at the beginning of the work-placement. P₁₆ states that, during the work-placement, he perceived the main supervisor and other physiotherapists occasionally observing his work, but never directly commenting or criticizing the course of his actions with his patients. As another example of his disappointment, P₁₆ cites his experience of being left too much alone with the exploration of his goals and actions during the work-placement. P₁₆ states that the main supervisor did not pay attention to his goals and interests until the very end of the work-placement, when his desired and achieved outcomes were explored together with the supervisor. P₁₆ states that since he perceived himself being placed more in a position of a worker than a student, he felt that he was not getting the full potential for learning and self-improvement during his last work-placement. After being asked by the interviewer about the joint reflection with teacher and peers at school, after the work-placement, P₁₆ states that it was not particularly interesting to him, since the focus was not in individual learning outcomes. Besides, after being asked about his thought of grading of the work-placement, P₁₆ states that it would not have been his desire, since he believed that fair grading and comparability between the work-placements was impossible.

APPENDIX C

Steps 2-3 of the descriptive phenomenological method

- with the example of one description (P₁₄)

<p>Step 2</p> <p>Participant's naïve and concrete description broken down into meaning units in the original interview context.</p>	<p>Step 3</p> <p>Participant's natural attitude expressions transformed to 3rd person expressions, more revelatory of the phenomenologically and educationally sensitive expressions of the lived-through experience.</p>	<p>Note. * indicates that the researcher's question has been incorporated in the transformation</p>
<p>[1. Jos nyt siis kuvaillette teidän kokemuksia arvioinnista nyt tässä viimisessä harjottelussa...]</p> <p>Mä olin siis [...] paikassa harjottelemassa.. ja mulla on ehkä samanlaisia ajatuksia ku [...], että oli hirveesti niinku sellaista itsenäistä tekemistä.. ja sitte niinku korostu oikeestaan enemmän sellanen itsearviointi ..et ei niinkään ollu sitä sellasta aikaa niinku ohjaajilla..</p>	<p>[The student is being asked to describe her assessment experience related to a work-placement..]</p> <p>P₁₄, states that she did her work-placement at [a private sector organization] and that she has possibly similar thoughts with [another student]. P₁₄ states that there was a lot of independent work during the work-placement. P₁₄ states that the situation emphasized more self-assessment [P₁₄ implicitly refers to supervisors' assessment]. P₁₄ states that the supervisors did not have time for assessment as such [P₁₄ implicitly refers to time separately for student assessment].</p>	<p>*P₁₄, a physiotherapy student describes her experience of student assessment related to a work-placement, and states that while there was a lot of independent work during the work-placement, and the workplace supervisors did not have time separately for student assessment, the situation as such emphasized student self-assessment.</p>
<p>2. ja mulla oli itse asiassa niin ihan useampia ohjaajia.. tän harjottelun aikana.. niin et kyllä niinku ne aina kysy, että.. että miten menee.. ja onks sulla jotain kysyttävää, ja haluutko käydä joitakin asioita läpi.. ja sit.. niin sitte.. sit käytiin, jos oli jotakin niinku pinnalla.. mutta.. mut periaatteessa ei ollu varattu niinku sellasta aikaa sille.. niinku arvioinnille..</p>	<p>P₁₄ states that she actually had several supervisors during this work-placement. P₁₄ states that they [P₁₄ implicitly refers to the supervisors] often asked P₁₄, how she was doing, if she had anything to ask, and whether there was anything that she wanted to go through with them [P₁₄ implicitly refers to the supervisors]. P₁₄ states that if she had something acute, then they [P₁₄ implicitly refers to herself and the supervisors] went through it. P₁₄ states that, in principal, no time was booked separately</p>	<p>P₁₄ states that she had several supervisors at the workplace, who often asked P₁₄, how she was doing, if she had anything to ask, and whether there was anything that she wanted to go through together with the supervisors. P₁₄ states that if she had something acute that she wanted to go through together, then they went through it. P₁₄ states however that, in principal, no time was booked separately for assessment with the supervisors.</p>

	for assessment as such [P ₁₄ implicitly refers to assessment with the supervisors].	
3.. mut mä tota itse asiassa ensimmäistä kertaa tässä harjoittelussa, niin käytin tämmöstä reflektiopäiväkirjasysteemiä.. ja kirjoitin ite niinku aina joka päivä.. olin varannu aikaa itelleni siihen, et niinku kirjoitan läpi kaikki asiakastilanteet, mitä mulla on ollu.. ja mitä on niinku käyny sen päivän aikana läpi.. ja koin sen tosi hyödylliseksi.. et siitä oikeesti niinku oppi ja.. sitä on hauska niinku lukee ja.. ja sitte oli helppo palata, jos oli esimerkiksi joku asiakas toista kertaa.. sit katto, että ahaa, että niin, et viime viikolla musta tuntui tältä ja mä tein tällasia asioita.. ja näissä en.. et nyt mä kokeilen jotain muuta, tai.. se oli mun mielestä tosi hyödyllistä..	P ₁₄ states that she during this work-placement, for the first time, used a reflection diary. P ₁₄ states that she based on her own initiative reserved time to herself, each day, for writing down all the client situations that she went through that day. P ₁₄ states that she perceived it [P ₁₄ refers to the use of the reflection diary and writing down all the client situations] very useful and enhancing her own learning. P ₁₄ states that she enjoyed reading it, and found it easy to get back to [by it P ₁₄ refers to the reflection diary], if, for example, having the same client coming again. P ₁₄ states that it [P ₁₄ refers to reading the reflection diary] also enhanced recalling and making judgments about her own feelings and actions; whether or not she had been successful, and what else she would like to do this time./	P ₁₄ states that she during this work-placement, for the first time, used a reflection diary, and based on her own initiative reserved time to herself, each day, for writing down all the client situations that she went through that day. P ₁₄ states that she perceived the use of the reflection diary, and writing down all her daily client situations, very useful and enhancing her own learning. P ₁₄ states that she enjoyed reading the reflection diary, and found it easy to get back to, if, for example, having the same client coming again. P ₁₄ states that reading the reflection diary also enhanced recalling and making judgments about her own feelings and actions; whether or not she had been successful, and what else she would like to do this time./
4. ..mut et aika paljon just korostu se, että ite pitää niinku ryhtyä sitä arviointia.. ja niinku tarttua siihen, että nyt antakaa mulle jotakin palautetta..	P ₁₄ states that there was a strong demand for taking a hold over the assessment, and ask [the workplace supervisors] to give some feedback to her./	
5... mulla oli pitkin harjoittelua sellasia, että sitte jos musta tuntui, että.. en mä vaikka osaa, tai muuta.. niin sitte mä niinku kysyin, että voit sä tulla tähän tilanteeseen.. tai niinku jotenki.. en ehkä enemmän.. tai niinku, et enemmänki siihen, et nyt mä en niinku ite osaa, tai mun taidot ei riitä.. ku että siihen, että voit sä tulla arvioimaan, mitä mä teen..	P ₁₄ states that if she felt during the practice that she wasn't able to do something, or there was something else, she then asked if one of the supervisors could come to the situation. P ₁₄ states that she asked if one of the supervisors could come to the situation more because she felt that she wasn't able to do something by herself, or her skills were not adequate enough, rather than asking to come to assess what she was doing.	P ₁₄ states that during the practice in general, if she felt that she wasn't able to do something, or there was some other kind of a problem, she usually asked if one of the supervisors could come with her to the situation. P ₁₄ states that she asked if one of the supervisors could come to the situation more in the sense that she wasn't able to do something by herself, or that her own skills were not adequate enough in that situation, rather than in the sense of asking the supervisor to come to the situation to assess her.
6. Että silleen niinku koin, että taustatukea on koko ajan.. mut et ei ollu niinku.. mulla ei ollu koskaan	P ₁₄ states that she felt that there was always background support at the workplace, but	Although P ₁₄ perceived that she never had a feeling of being much assessed during

sellanen olo, että mua niinku jotenki arvioitas kauheesti.. /	she never had a feeling of being much assessed.	the placement, she felt that there was always background support available at the workplace.
7. et siellä hirveesti luotettiin siihen, että jokainen osaa ne hommat, ja tekee, ja pyytää sitte apua ku tarttee.. /	P ₁₄ states that there was a lot of trust that everybody could do the jobs and ask help if needed.	P ₁₄ perceived that there was a lot of trust at the workplace that everybody could manage their work tasks and ask help if needed.
7. No, ehkä mulla oli vähän semmonen.. ku oli kuitenkin kyseessä aika sellanen.. spesifi ala, millä niin.. mihin tää harjottelu niinku kohdentu.. niin sitte niinku.. jotenki ei voinu olettaakaan, että se oma osaaminen on niinku jollain tietyllä tasolla.. /	P ₁₄ perceived her last work-placement focusing on quite a specific area in physiotherapy. P ₁₄ states that because the last work-placement focused on quite a specific area in physiotherapy she couldn't expect her own skills to be on a certain level.	P ₁₄ states that, by perceiving her last work-placement focusing on a certain special area in physiotherapy, she couldn't expect her own skills to be on a certain level in that special area.
8. ja sit siellä oli paljon sellasta, että.. et niinku kaikki se vapaa-aika.. tai niinku asiakkaitten väliin jäävä aika, ja muu.. niin ohjaajat kyllä oli kauheen niinku.. et halus antaa hirveesti tietoa ja.. opettaa asioita, ja, ja.. et meillä on tämmönen kokemus, että tällaset jutut toimii.. ja niinku, et mitä sä ite ajattelet tässä käyttää.. ja nekin oli kauheen kuitenkin sellasta niinku.. niinku et ne oli hirveen sellasia opetusmaisia, mut toisaalta kauheen sellasia keskustelevia.. niinku ne tilanteet sitte heiän kanssa.. sit just, et se enemmän oli ehkä niitten puolelta semmosta niinku, että.. et me halutaan antaa sulle tietoa.. kun mitä niinkun.. tai jotenki niinku.. ikään ku.. tosi vaikee selittää, mutta.. mutta silleen, että.. et me halutaan opettaa sulle näitä juttuja, että.. et niinku sä pääset tähän alaan sisälle.. tai niinku näihin tiettyihin asioihin.. et, et jotenki niinku.. /	P ₁₄ perceived that during the work-placement there was some free time, the time that was available between the clients. P ₁₄ states that there were a lot of things at the workplace, that the supervisors were willing to give her during the free time, the time that was available between the clients. P ₁₄ states that the supervisors wanted to give her a lot of information, and teach her different things, based on their own experience about something that works, or by asking her what she would use in a certain situation. P ₁₄ states that the situations with the supervisors were very instructional, but on the other hand they were very conversational situations. P ₁₄ states, finding it hard to explain, that she perceived the supervisors from their side may have wanted to give her information and teach all those things to her, so that she would get into that special area of her work-placement, or into the certain things of that special area.	
9. tietysti osa niistä jutuista, niin.. ne meni jo niinku niin paljon pitemmälle.. niin jotenki ei niinku voinu kuvitellakaan, et mä osaisin tommosia juttuja niinku valmiiks.. /	P ₁₄ states that some of the things that the supervisors taught her went much further than the others. P ₁₄ states that because some of the things, that the supervisors taught	

	her, went so much further, she couldn't possibly assume herself already knowing those things.	
10. .niin, että ehkä se sitte.. siis mä oon tosi tyytyväinen siihen harjottelujaksoon.. mut se ehkä oli niinku.. just kaiken arvioinnin ja muun näkökulmasta niinku.. kauheestihan siinä ei sit tullu taas sellasta.. et se enemmän oli itelle vaan sellasta niinku oppia.. ja yritti imeä kaikkea mahdollista, mitä sieltä voi saaha.. et sitte niinku niitä voi soveltaa ja käyttää ite jatkossa../	P ₁₄ perceived herself being very satisfied with the work-placement period, in general, but maybe not receiving much for herself from the assessment perspective. P ₁₄ perceived herself during the placement trying to learn and absorb everything that was available from that special area in physiotherapy, taking all that she could deploy and use in the future.	
11. niin.. ehkä mä meninki sinne enemmän just sillä tavalla, että.. et mua kiinnostaa semmonen tietty, spesifi ala ja mä haluan saada siitä mahdollisimman paljon irti ja.. mahdollisimman paljon tietoa.. ja oppia ja kokemusta ja..	P ₁₄ states that she possibly went to the work-placement more so that she was interested in a certain specific area in physiotherapy, and wanting to obtain as much information as possible about the special area, and learning and experience in that special area.	P ₁₄ states that she possibly went to the last work-placement with an attitude of being interested in the certain special area in physiotherapy, and desiring for as much information, learning, and experience, as possible, in that special area.
12. Oliko kuvattu tätä auki.. miten onnistuneesti.. jos nyt ajattelet jälkepäin siellä oppimisopimuksessa.. mitä sä lähdit rakentamaan..? Kyllä mun mielestä.. Joo.. kävitteks te sen läpi? Siis ohjaajien kanssa.. ..niin.. Joo.. siis käytiin alussa.. ja käytiin väliarviointi, ja loppuarviointi.. et kyl niinku.. kuitenkin menttiin aika lailla sen mukaisesti.. ja mä sain siitä myöskin palautetta.. siitä arviointilomakkeesta.. ja mulle annettiin niinku ohjeita, että.. et, et.. ku siellä oli niitä arviointikriteerejä.. ja sitte niitä kyllä niinku mun mielestä sieltä ohjaajilta tuli tosi hyviä vinkkejä, et mitä sun kannattas.. tota niin.. niinku lisätä tänne (osoittaa tavoitesaraketta lomakkeessa).. tai millä jutuilla sitä vois arvioida ja.. koen, että sen käyttö oli kuitenkin hyvää..	P ₁₄ states that she and her supervisors went through her assessment form in the beginning of the work-placement, and then had the middle and the final assessment pretty much based on the assessment form. P ₁₄ states that she also got feedback from the supervisors about the assessment form, and some advice concerning the assessment criteria, and the other things in the assessment form. P ₁₄ states that she received very good hints from the supervisors about what might be worth of adding as a goal in the assessment form, or what could be used as a criterion, when assessing it. P ₁₄ indicates the goal column in the assessment form to the researcher. P ₁₄ perceived the use of the assessment form being fairly good.	*When asked by the researcher to reflect more on the sense of the creation and the use of the assessment form P ₁₄ states that she and her supervisors went through her assessment form in the beginning of the work-placement, and then had the middle and the final assessment fairly much based on the assessment form. P ₁₄ states that she got feedback from the supervisors about the assessment form, and some advice concerning the use of the assessment criteria. P ₁₄ states that she received very good hints from the supervisors about what might be worth of adding as a goal in the assessment form, or what could be used as a criterion, when assessing the desired achievement. P ₁₄ was able to indicate the goal column in the assessment form to the researcher. P ₁₄ perceived the use of the assessment form being fairly good.
13. Että ehkä tossa.. mä en tiedä tulkitseko liian pitkälle, mut että	P ₁₄ explicitly answers in the affirmative.	*When asked by the researcher whether P ₁₄ felt

<p><i>vois ajatella, että se ehkä ohjas se oppimissopimus tässä tapauksessa nyt sit sitä.. et se kuitenkin kuulostaa siltä, että se on menny aika sun odotusten mukaisesti..</i> <i>..kyllä, kyllä..(nyökkäilee)</i></p>		<p>that the use of the assessment form was in line with her expectations P₁₄ explicitly answers in the affirmative.</p>
<p><i>14. Voiks jokainen vielä sen tavallaan sanoo, mihin [...] jo viittas, että miten tää oppimissopimus toimi teillä.. yhteisenä välineenä, tai miten te sitä käytitte?</i> <i>Itellä ainaki silleen, että.. mulla on joka ikinen harjottelu.. koska en oo tehny yhtään täällä [...] alueella.. niin joka paikassa on joutunu niinku käymään sen läpi.. ja selittämään niinku sen, että miten se toimii se lomake.. niin, niin jotenki niinku se.. se käyttö on itelle sellasta.. että niinku on oppinu jo sen, että nyt istutaan alas ja mä, selitän sulle tän, että miten tää toimii tää.. tää systeemi..</i></p>	<p>P₁₄ states that because she has done none of her work-placements in the nearby area of the school, she has in each placement fell into going through the assessment form and explaining the function of it. P₁₄ states that the use of the assessment form for herself is based on her previous experiences. P₁₄ states that she has learnt to ask the supervisors to sit down and let her explain the use of the assessment for them.</p>	<p>*When asked by the researcher to reflect more on the use of the assessment form P₁₄ states that because none of her work-placements have been located in the nearby area of the school, it has been necessary for her, in each placement, to present the assessment form and explain the use of it. P₁₄ perceives the use of the assessment form for herself being based on her previous experiences. P₁₄ states that she has learnt to ask the supervisors to sit down and let her explain the use of the assessment for them.</p>
<p><i>15. mutta mulla on ehkä samanlainen kokemus nyt tässä viimeisessä harjottelussa (nyökkää hyväksyvästi toisen haastateltavan suuntaan), että siitä oli niinku eniten hyötyä.. ja.. ja sen huomasi myös siinä, että millä tavalla paneutu sen lomakkeen tekemiseen.. että niinku tällä kertaa se oli paljon pitempi.. ku missään muussa harjottelussa aikasemmin.. että sinne myöski tuli niitä asioita paljon enemmän.. ja tuota niin.. ehkä sekin meni enemmän sillä tavalla, nyt sen lomakkeen täyttäminen, että.. et me käytiin se niinku yhdessä läpi.. mutta mä niinku annoin sieltä ikään ku sen teeman ja ajatuksen.. mikä siitä niinku.. ja sieltä tuli se palaute, jonka mä ite kirjasin.. et me ei kauheesti niinku.. yhdessä istuttu siihen, ja nyt me kirjoitetaan tätä yhdessä.. vaan enemmänki silleen, että mulla on tässä tämmönen teema, mitä sanottavaa sulla siitä.. ja sitte katottiin.. ja käytiin se läpi..</i></p>	<p>P₁₄ affirmatively nods towards another informant. P₁₄ states that her experience about her last placement is probably similar with another student. P₁₄ states that she gained the most benefit from the use of the assessment form in her last work-placement. P₁₄ states that she noticed it in the way that she put herself in filling the form. P₁₄ states that this time the form was much longer than in any of the previous placements, and there was much more content to put into it. P₁₄ states that possibly the filling of the form went differently too. P₁₄ states that as she went through the assessment form together with the supervisors, she gave the theme and the thought from the form, and after receiving the supervisors' feedback, she recorded it into the assessment form herself. P₁₄ states that it was not much like they would have been sitting down and filling the form together, but more like she was introducing the theme and asking from the supervisors what they had to say about it, and then going</p>	<p>P₁₄ states that her experience about her last placement is probably similar with another student. P₁₄ is able to confirm this by nodding affirmatively towards the other student. P₁₄ states that she gained the most benefit from the use of the assessment form in her last work-placement. P₁₄ states that she noticed it in the way that she put herself in filling the form. P₁₄ states that this time the form was much longer than in any of the previous placements, and there was much more content to put into it. P₁₄ states that possibly the filling of the form went differently too. P₁₄ states that whilst she was going through the assessment form together with the supervisors, she was the one who picked the theme and thought from form for the supervisors' feedback, and after receiving the supervisors' feedback, she recorded it into the assessment form. P₁₄ states that the procedure was not to sit down and fill the form together, but more that whilst going through the assessment form, she introduced the</p>

	through it.	theme and then asked what the supervisors had to say about it.
<p>16. ...niin mulla oli sama ku mitä [...] sano, et mulla oli siellä.. mulla oli tosi konkreettisia tavoitteita tälle jaksolle.. ettei ollu mitään niin valtavia tavoitteita, niinku on ehkä ollu alun harjotteluissa.. niin sit siellä tartuttiin siihen, että okei.. et sä haluut oppia ton jutun, et me otetaan se yhden opiskelusektion teemaksi.. ja me pidettiin joka viikko sellanen opiskelusekso näitten fysioterapeuttien kanssa yhdessä.. siihen oli aina varattu semmonen pari tuntia kalenteriin aikaa.. ja otettiin sitte niitä teemoja, mitä mulla oli siellä.. että kyllä se sillä tavalla ohjas sitä.. et ne oli niinku konkreettisesti esillä..</p>	<p>P₁₄ states that she similarly with another student had very concrete learning goals for this period. P₁₄ states that possibly her learning goals were more massive in the earlier work-placements. P₁₄ states that the workplace supervisors took account her learning goals, by taking them as the themes of their weekly learning sessions. P₁₄ states that she had a learning session with her workplace supervisors every week. P₁₄ states that the supervisors regularly booked a couple of hours in the weekly calendar for the joint learning session. P₁₄ states that in the weekly learning sessions the supervisors took into consideration the themes that she had possessed among her learning goals. P₁₄ states that in that sense her concretely presented learning goals directed the work-placement.</p>	
<p>17. <i>Mites sitte opettajan rooli.. mikä oli opettajan arvioinnin merkitys tässä harjottelussa?</i> Se oli aika pieni.. se oli se, että ku sä ne tavoites laitoit [...], niin siihen tuli semmonen parin rivin kommentti, että.. hyvin olet asettanut tavoitteet.. ja onnea harjottelujaksolle.. ei se kauheasti niinku ohjannu..</p>	<p>P₁₄ answers that the teacher's role and the meaning of the teacher's assessment was quite small. P₁₄ states that it means that when she put her learning goals to the shared online environment, she then received a couple of lines comment from the teacher, that she had created good goals, and the teacher wished her good luck for her practice period. P₁₄ states that teacher's online comments didn't direct her much.</p>	<p>*When asked by the researcher what was the teacher's role and the meaning of the teacher's assessment in this placement P₁₄'s answer is that the role and the meaning of the teacher's assessment was quite small. P₁₄ states that the teacher's assessment consisted of a couple of lines comment for creating good learning goals and wishing her good luck for the practice in the shared online environment. P₁₄ perceived the teacher's online comments having very little directive meaning to her.</p>
<p>18. <i>Oliko sulla tuota niin minkälaisia odotuksia itsellä.. mitä sä olisit toivonu sen olevan?</i> No itse asiassa ei ollu kauheita odotuksia, koska mun mielestä se on aina ollu vähän silleen niinku, että.. et tietysti ku itekki on tehny niitä harjotteluita muualla.. niin koskaan opettajat ei oo tullu siellä</p>	<p>P₁₄ answers that she didn't really have a lot of expectations about the teacher's role during the last work-placement. P₁₄ states that in her opinion the teacher's role has always been fairly similar. P₁₄ states that as she has done all her</p>	<p>*When asked by the researcher to reflect on her own expectations of the teacher's role P₁₄ answers that as the teacher's role in her opinion has always been fairly similar she didn't really have a lot of expectations about the teacher's role</p>

<p>käymään.. niin se on aina vaan ollu se, et [..]een on tullu se, että olen lukenut tavoitteesi, ja näyttää hyvältä.. niin jotenki niinku.. en kauheesti oottanutkaan, et sinne tulis sen enempää..</p>	<p>work-placements further from the school, the teachers have never visited at her placements. P₁₄ states that there has always been only the couple of lines comment from the teacher in the online environment that she has read her goals and they seem fine. P₁₄ states that she didn't expect there to be more than the couple of lines comment from the teacher in this placement either.</p>	<p>during the last work-placement either. P₁₄ states that as she has done all her work-placements further from the school, the teachers have never visited at her placements. P₁₄ states that as there has always been only the couple of lines comment from the teacher in the online environment that she has read her goals and they seem fine she didn't expect there to be more in this placement either.</p>
<p>19. Oliko tätä harjottelua ennen joku.. tai oliko harjottelun jälkeen joku täällä koulussa.. arvioinnin.. yhteinen..? Ennen harjottelua oli se.. orientaatio.. mut sehän oli tosi niinku lyhyt.. ei mulla ainakaan jääny siitä niinku mitään mieleen.. ku ei me ees tehty siellä niinku niitä oppimistavoitteita.. vaan ne jäi niinku ite tehtäväks.. ja sitte eilen meillä oli se palautekeskustelu, niin sekin oli sellanen kauheen niinku.. se oli vaan.. pienryhmissä käytiin vaan läpi niinku että.. semmosella tosi yleisellä tasolla.. että jotenki niinku.. ei.. en mä niinku kokenu sitä kauheen merkitykselliseksi.. tai niinku että.. mun mielestä se, että.. et me ollaan keskenään tuolla.. esimerkiksi eilen istutti kahvilla, ja käyty niinku niitä kokemuksia läpi.. niin se on ollu jotenki paljon merkityksellisempää kun se, et opettajan pitämä tunnin mittanen keskustelutilaisuus eilen..</p>	<p>P₁₄ states that there was an orientation before the practice. P₁₄ states that the orientation was very brief. P₁₄ states that she can't recall anything about the orientation. P₁₄ states that they didn't even create the learning goals in the orientation. P₁₄ states that the creation of the learning goals was left as an independent task. P₁₄ states that they had a feedback discussion at school after the work-placement. P₁₄ states that the feedback discussion, which they had at school the day before, was in small groups and on a very general level. P₁₄ states that she didn't perceive the feedback discussion that was done at school after the work-placement very meaningful. P₁₄ states that, on the previous day, she and her peer students, whilst sitting and having coffee by themselves also reflected their work-placement experiences. P₁₄ states that reflecting their experiences by themselves whilst sitting and having coffee was much more meaningful to her than the one hour length discussion that was led by the teacher the day before.</p>	<p>*When asked by the researcher whether there was some kind of joint assessment arranged before or after the placement P₁₄ answers that there was a joint orientation before the practice, which she perceived being very brief and not particularly meaningful to her, as they didn't even create the learning goals in that situation, which would have been something particular to her. P₁₄ states that they also had a feedback discussion at school after the work-placement. P₁₄ perceived the feedback discussion that they had at school in small groups being on a very general level, and not particularly meaningful to her. P₁₄ perceived going through their experiences among student peers, whilst sitting and having coffee by themselves, being much more meaningful to her than the one hour length feedback discussion that was led at school by the teacher after the work-placement.</p>
<p>20. Sitä mä just toivoisinki teidän nyt miettivän, että niinku.. mikä oli sen merkitys.. niinku arvioinnin.. teidän kokemuksenne.. arvioinnin näkökulmasta? Mitä tapahtu opettajan kanssa ennen, harjottelun aikana, harjottelun jälkeen?</p>	<p>P₁₄ affirmatively nods towards another informant. P₁₄ states that she agrees with another student that there rarely are any comments about the final assessment in the shared online environment. P₁₄ states</p>	<p>*When asked by the researcher to reflect more on the sense of what happened before, during, and after the placement with the teacher P₁₄ states that she agrees with another student. P₁₄ is able to</p>

<p>..mut se on totta (nyökkää hyväksyvästi toiselle haastateltavalle), että se.. siitä niinku loppuarvioinnista.. siitä harvemmin enää tulee mitään niinku kommenttia sit sinne [...] et se tosiaan niinku.. ne alun tavoitteet ja se väliarviointi.. niin niihin yleensä opettaja vastaa.. mutta siihen viimiseen, ku sä laitit sen loppuarvioinnin, niin siihen ei enää saa mitään.. palautetta.. et sitte vaan joskus tonne lokeroon tipahtaa se oppimissopimus.. ja siinä on joku ok ja päivämäärä.. ja sitte tulee se kurssimerkintä..</p>	<p>that indeed there are the goals in the beginning of the placement, and then the middle assessment, which the teacher usually responds for both. P₁₄ states that to the last draft of the assessment form, where the student has added the final assessment, one gets no feedback from the teacher. P₁₄ states that then after some time the learning agreement is dropped to the locker, with the markings of 'OK' and the date in it, and then the student gets the course marking to the credit record.</p>	<p>confirm her agreement with the other student by nodding affirmatively towards another informant. P₁₄ perceived herself rarely receiving any comments from the teacher about the final assessment, stating that the teacher usually responds to the learning goals in the beginning of the placement, and the middle assessment, but to the last draft of the assessment form, where the student has added the final assessment, one gets no feedback from the teacher. P₁₄ states that after some time has elapsed from returning the last draft of the assessment form, the form is dropped back to the locker, with the teacher's markings of 'OK' and the date in it, and then the student is credited with the course marking to the credit record.</p>
<p>21. Mut ehkä niinku.. eilenki se työskentely oli niinku pienryhmissä.. niin jotenki niinku haluais ehkä enemmän sellasta, että.. että se olis niinku henkilökohtasta sit myöski.. se opettajan kanssa se palaute.. nyt niinku keskustelun käyminen.. koska niinku missään vaiheessa.. et.. okei mulla on siellä paperissa sen opettajan nimi, kuka mun harjottelun ohjaaja on.. mut niinku et ei mulla oo minkäänlaista niinku.. sillä tavalla kontaktia.. tai että mä.. hän ois antanu mulle suoraan palautetta, tai jotenki niinku.. ehkä kaipaais jotain sellasta.. niinku suoraa kontaktia..</p>	<p>P₁₄ states that on the earlier day she had been working with other students in small groups at school, but she probably more would have desired for a personal feedback discussion with the teacher. P₁₄ states that evidently she now has the teacher's signature in the assessment form. P₁₄ states that she didn't have a personal contact with the teacher, where the teacher would have given direct feedback to her. P₁₄ states that she probably was missing for, a direct contact with the teacher.</p>	<p>P₁₄ states that instead of working at school with other students in small groups, after the work-placement, she probably desired for having a personal feedback discussion with the teacher. P₁₄ perceived herself evidently having a teacher's signature in her assessment form, as a note of approval for receiving the course credit, stating that what she really was missing for, was having a personal contact with the teacher, where the teacher would be able to give her direct feedback.</p>
<p>22. Mitä sä sieltä odottaisit sen henkilökohtasen keskustelun kautta? Mun mielestä jos käytäs sen opettajan kanssa läpi esimerkiksi se oppimissopimus.. niin, koska hän on ikään kun niinku.. mä olen jotenki niinku liian lähellä sitä.. ja sit myöski ne harjottelun ohjaajat.. niin ne on niinku.. ne on niille tuttuja asioita.. mut sit se.. sille opettajalle, niin.. et se.. se niinku näkis vähän niinku ulkopuolisen silmin sitä.. ja vois ehkä kysyä jotaki kysymyksiä, et oot</p>	<p>P₁₄ states that she would like to go through the assessment form with the teacher. P₁₄ states that she and the workplace supervisors are somehow too close with the learning agreement, and also familiar with its content. P₁₄ states that the teacher would see it more from the perspective of an outsider, and probably could raise some questions, whether she (P₁₄) was really sure about</p>	<p>*When asked by the researcher to reflect more on her perceived desire for a personal discussion with the teacher P₁₄ states that she would like to reflect the assessment form together with the teacher. P₁₄ states that she and the workplace supervisors, who have been writing the content of it, are too close to it, and familiar with its content. P₁₄ states that the teacher, as an outsider of</p>

sä oikeesti niinku vaikka varma, et sä vaikka saavutit tän tavoitteen.. tai jotenki niinku.. saada jotenki konkreettisesti semmosta henkilökohtasta palautetta.. ja niinku käytäs sitä asiaa vielä läpi..	achieving a certain goal, or she (P ₁₄) could concretely receive personal feedback from the teacher, and they could go through it again.	its writing process, would be able to see it differently than the student and the workplace supervisor and raise some meaningful questions concerning the achievement of the goals, and P ₁₄ could receive personal feedback from the teacher by reflecting the assessment form together with the teacher.
23. <i>Mutta kuitenkin oppimisesta?</i> ..kyllä.. ..oppimiseen liittyen.. ..kyllä.. et miten ne niinku kohtaa ne mun tavoitteet ja sit se arviointi.. toisensa..	P ₁₄ explicitly answers in the affirmative. P ₁₄ claims that she meant the correspondence between her learning goals and the assessment.	*When asked by the researcher whether the sense of the perceived personal feedback expectations were linked with learning, P ₁₄ explicitly answers in the affirmative and states that she meant the correspondence between her learning goals and the assessment.
24. ..minun on ehkä pakko vielä sanoa.. tää liittyy vertaisarviointiin.. että tää harjottelu meillä oli ainoa sellanen, missä me ei annettu ollenkaan vertaisarviointia [..]ssa.. niin ehkä sekin oli sellanen tekijä, et sitte niinku jotenki tuntu, että jäi niinkun.. ilman niinku jotenki mitään sellasta.. niinku et sit se oli vaan niinku sen harjottelupaikan se arviointi.. et jotenki niinku.. vaikka välttämättä niinku.. opettajat on antanu ihan saman verran aina.. mut sit ku siellä on myös tullu se vertaispalaute.. niin sit on jotenki kokemu niinku silleen, että okei, et joku on niinku lukenu noita mun juttuja.. ja.. ja kuitenkin niinku.. sillä on kuitenkin sellanen merkitys, että joku niinku oikeesti kattoo henkilökohtasesti vaan sitä sun juttua..	P ₁₄ states that there is something that she urges to say, which relates to peer-assessment. P ₁₄ states that the last work-placement was the only placement, where they didn't give peer feedback in the shared online environment. P ₁₄ states that because she didn't receive peer feedback, it might have caused the feeling that she was lacking of something. P ₁₄ states that, for her, it felt that there was just the assessment from the workplace. P ₁₄ states that although the teachers have always given just as much as during this placement, she has also received peer feedback. P ₁₄ states she has felt that at least somebody has been reading her stuff. P ₁₄ states that the meaning of it has been that somebody is looking personally her stuff only.	P ₁₄ , feeling an urge to say it, states that the last work-placement period was the only period, where she with her peer students didn't give feedback to each others in the shared online environment. P ₁₄ states that because she didn't receive peer feedback, it might have caused the feeling that she was lacking of something during the placement. P ₁₄ perceived that assessment at the workplace by the supervisors was not enough to her. P ₁₄ states that although the teachers have always given just as little feedback as during this placement, in the previous placements she has also received peer feedback. P ₁₄ perceived that the meaning of receiving peer-feedback has been that somebody, other than the workplace supervisors, is giving her personal feedback.
25. <i>Miten se vertaisarviointi on antanu tähän.. millä tavalla..jos tässä ei sitä ollu, mutta te ootte aikasemmin sitä käyny?</i> Se on ollu aina semmonen, että.. et niinku on ollu kivaa, ku joku on vaikka laittanu, et mä oon miettiny tota samaa juttua.. tai mulla on tuo sama tavote tai näin.. niin jotenki on luonu sellasia kiinnityskohtia, että.. että okei, että mä en oo menossa	P ₁₄ states that it has always been nice to receive a comment from a peer student, who has been thinking about the same issue or has the same goal. P ₁₄ states that receiving a comment from a peer student, who has been thinking about the same issue or has the same goal, has established her some kind of	*When asked by the researcher to reflect more on the perceived meaning of peer-feedback in the previous placements P ₁₄ states that it has been nice, for example, to receive a comment from a peer student, who has been thinking about the same issue or has the same goal. P ₁₄ perceives that receiving a

<p>ihan hakoteille.. että.. et niinku meillä on kuitenkin samantyylinen.. tai sama pohja, mistä me lähetään..</p>	<p>conviction of not being totally lost, but yet having a similar or a same kind of starting point with others.</p>	<p>comment from a peer student, who has been thinking about the same issue or has the same goal, has established her some kind of conviction of not being totally lost, but yet having a similar or a same kind of starting point with others.</p>
<p>26. <i>Sillon sitä saa tavallaan niinku peilata siihen vertaisen tekemiseen..</i> ..niin..</p>	<p>P₁₄ explicitly answers in the affirmative.</p>	<p>*When asked by the researcher whether P₁₄ felt that such a comment makes possible the comparison between the acts of herself and the peers P₁₄ explicitly answers in the affirmative.</p>

APPENDIX D

Ethical Approvals from the two participant organizations