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Equine Assisted Activities or Therapy:

Towards a Future Curriculum

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Abstract

Equine Assisted Activities and Therapy (EAA/T) is a non-invasive treatment modality recommended by the medical and educational community for a subset of challenged children and adults. As its popularity increases, so too are the concerns among stakeholders and the medical and educational professions about its legitimacy as a treatment modality. The main concern being that EAA/T practitioners have not acquired the professional skills required and that the EAA/T treatment programmes are not evidence-based. The central question of this research focused on identifying Equine Assisted Activities and or Therapy (EAA/T) and creating an optimal learning curricula and more practical experience for future practitioners.

In order to explore these issues an extensive multi-method research study was conducted to identify gaps in EAA/T curricula, which included a review of empirical data and different curriculum models. The Delphi Method (DM), a robust, qualitative, naturalistic, systematic and interactive research method was used to support the research. Part of the DM required an analysis of data, adaptation of issues and amendments to questions culminating in a collective consensus among EAA/T experts.

The key research findings suggested that current training programmes use curricula with significant gaps resulting in poor professional knowledge formation, a lack of experiential learning, insufficient knowledge of equestrianism and an inability to use pedagogic paradigms. Other findings showed that curricula being used were not being built as an application of sound theoretical principles but rather, transmitted in a manner that does not motivate active and meaningful learning or promote the best practical experience. As a consequence, national organisations and academies dedicated to EAA/T training sidestep high standards and core values for the sake of membership and financial gain.

This rigorous research study has highlighted gaps in current training practices and has made it possible to make recommendations for a future curriculum. Recommendations that suggest the future curriculum is built on sound theoretical principles developing foundation knowledge to operate EAA/T in all fields of practice. This could set new quality and performance benchmarks and provides EAA/T practitioners with adequate tools to connect best practices to people with real-life challenges.

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Glossary of Terms

Arena

An arena is an enclosed area of land that can be used for exercising horses, teaching horseback riding skills, and providing therapeutic treatments for equine assisted activities therapy. It is a designated rectangular, square, circular or oval-shaped fenced or enclosed place. Arenas can be located indoors or outdoors. They should be sufficiently large, enough for a horse to move freely and safely (Clarkson, 2012).

Curriculum

A traditional definition of a curriculum is that it is a set of courses or plan of study. A curriculum is all learning, which is planned and guided by the school, whether it is carried out individually or in groups, inside or outside the school. As curriculum learning is planned, it is more than just courses of study. It is a statement of underlying philosophy or learning theory (Smith, 2000).

Diagnostic Reasoning

Diagnostic Reasoning is a process that can be used to determine, prevent and manage patients' problems in a clinical setting. It aids critical thinking and reasoning. Diagnostic reasoning, also known as DxR, is patient-simulation software that analyses a user's ability to diagnose a problem correctly and to recommend appropriate therapy (DeSantis, 2000; Bowen, 2006).

EAA/T Practitioners

EAA/T (Equine Assisted Activities / Therapy) Practitioner is a term used throughout this research to encompass all the different naming conventions for therapeutic riding instructors, who work with horses to carry out EAA/T. In some countries, therapeutic riding instructors are called Riding for the Disabled Instructors, and in other countries they are called Hippo Therapists. EAA/T practitioners are involved in repetitive practice to continuously hone their skills. Like other practitioners, they must also be qualified or registered to practice their occupation, profession, or religion. In this thesis, the word practitioner represents a person who regularly engages in an EAA/T activity that requires

skill or practice. It refers to all levels of EAA/T practitioners, including advanced practitioners who have become skilled in various equine assisted activities. It does not mean that all EAA/T are professional and that they can be referred to as trained specialists in the medical legal or religious professions (Bartunek, 2007).

Eagala

Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association (EAGALA) is a non-profit association for professionals using horse therapy to address mental health and human development needs. Eagala was founded in 1999 and has developed into two models, Equine Assisted Psychotherapy and Equine Assisted Growth and Learning (Eagala, 2014).

Epona

A multi-disciplinary educational organisation, where humans, horses and other animals are supported in co-creating a new way of being, one that emphasises authenticity, collaboration, and experimentation. The emphasis is on learning how to thrive rather than simply survive, expanding both human and animal consciousness/potential. Epona considers the constant interplay of body, mind, spirit, and emotion, developing intuition, flexibility, and inter-subjective relationship skills to balance (Kohanov, 2001).

Equestrianism

Equestrianism refers to the art of riding in multiple disciplines, like dressage, jumping, vaulting, handball, polo and cross-country. **Equestrianism includes the knowledge of the horse, its training and care**. Podhajsky (1965) who is probably the most famous director of the Spanish Riding School in Vienna, and disciple of Francios Robichon de la Gueriner (1729-31) maintains that equestrianism requires a **thinking rider**, a rider who has knowledge of and understand both the physical and mental state of a horse, as well as its movement and balance. He or she must understand the inside and the outside of the horse, and not be driven by modern methods of training (cruel bits, and excessive punishment when using draw reins, whips and spurs), but abide by the laws of nature. All EAA/T practitioners or trainers must be, at all times be, '**thinking riders'** and should be able to **understand the feelings of horses, and anticipate their reactions**. Practitioners who understand equestrianism could have enough education **to understand cause and effect** (Podhajsky, 1965).

Equine Assisted Activities/Therapy (EAA/T)

A human/horse experience that provides and facilitates a treatment modality for people from all backgrounds and all walks of life, in a variety of ways that encourage physical, cognitive, and behavioural improvement, including increased strength and flexibility, improved motor skills, promotion of speech and cognitive reasoning, as well as building relationships and social skills. EAA/T is a global term that embraces Therapeutic Riding (TR), therapeutic carriage driving, interactive vaulting, which is similar to gymnastics on horseback, equine-facilitated learning, educational health activities improving intellectual ability and hippotherapy. The therapeutic activities are carried out either on the ground or on top of the horse, in the arena, or in or around the stable.

EAA/T provides specially structured instructional techniques, which facilitate learning skills by carrying out motivating tasks and activities with a horse. EAA/T offers the contact and controlled opportunities for challenged learners to experience responsibility, independence, self-regulation and control, and task completion, which improve self-management, negotiation and team awareness, self-image, self-esteem, and self-awareness (Path Intl., 2014).

Groundwork

Groundwork is a technique designed to help develop a bond between the horse and the trainer, which leads to greater trust and the ability to get the most from the relationship. Generally, it is used to improve a horse's suppleness, obedience and education. It teaches trainers how to tune-in to the subtle body language of the horse and communicates with it in a much clearer way. It contains behaviourist techniques that relax both the horse and trainer (Bailey, 2007), and allow for new opportunities and skills to develop. Groundwork can be used in the EAA/T setting as it builds confidence and trust through social interaction with the horse.

Hippotherapy

The word hippotherapy derives from the Greek word hippos, meaning horse. The term refers to the use of the movement of the horse as a treatment tool by physical therapists, occupational therapists and speech/language pathologists, to address impairments, functional limitations and disabilities in clients with neuromotor and sensory dysfunction.

It is used as part of an integrated treatment programme to achieve functional goals (Path Intl., 2014).

Hippotherapy engages the client in activities on the horse that are enjoyable and challenging. In the controlled hippotherapy environment, the therapist modifies the horse's movement and carefully grades sensory input, establishing a foundation for improved neurologic function and sensory processing. This foundation is home to a wide range of daily activities, making the horse a valuable therapeutic tool for rehabilitation (Strauss, 1991; Meregillano, 2004; ACPTR, The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, 2015).

Horsemanship

Horsemanship is a term that has been used from ancient times. Today, it is important aspect of the human/horse relationship that practitioners, trainers and riders learn horsemanship skills that improve the development and maintenance of strong positive relationships. Horsemanship requires practitioners', trainers and riders to know and understand a horse's needs. Hausberger et al. (2008) maintain that

> *deficits in the management conditions (housing, feeding, possibilities for social contact, and training methods) may lead to relational problems between horses and humans.*

Horse husbandry continues to be a varied experience for horses. Feeding is a positive experience, while veterinary inspections and treatments can be negative experiences. Hausberger, et al. (2008) maintain that horseman should understand that vaccination, foot care, administration of medication and transport, may constitute aversive contacts with humans, increasing fear reactions and inducing long lasting undesirable reactions to humans. Hausberger, et al. (2008) are convinced that it is important to train humans who are working with horses to improve the human/horse relationship and the welfare of both horses and riders. They are concerned that the lack of proper knowledge can lead to many accidents and the increased numbers of horses experiencing decreased welfare. Horsemanship requires horseman to learn how to safely approach a horse, (e.g. research in position, posture, gaze etc.) and build a human-horse bond (Hausberger, et al., 2008).

Horses Gaits

Horses have four gaits, including the walk, trot, canter and gallop, which enable them to travel for many miles over varied terrain often with great stamina and speed. Each gait has the horse's legs moving in a set order. The horse's left hand side is known as their nearside, with the foreleg being called the near fore and the hind leg being called the near hind. The right-hand side is known as the offside, with the foreleg called the off fore and the hind leg called the off hind (Sutor, 1998).

Longeing (informally known as Lunging)

Longeing (classical spelling from Latin and French origins) or lunging (UK English, informal USA), which is a technique for training horses, where a horse is asked to work at the end of a long line and respond to commands from a handler on the ground that holds the line. Longeing is performed on a large circle with the horse traveling around the outside edge of a real or imaginary ring with the trainer in the middle (Blazer, 2011; Stainer, 1976).

Mentor

A mentor is an experienced and trusted adviser, including an experienced person in a company or educational institution who trains and counsels new employees or students. Mentors working in the field of EAA/T are trusted experienced advisors who can support students and graduates. Mentors receive a formal training with certification. Mentoring formalises the education process, by providing continuing education opportunity while enhancing personal observation, evaluation and feedback skills. A mentor in EAA/T supports practitioners working in the field of practice, and must have a basic level of qualification (PATH Intl., 2014).

Psycho Vaulting (see Remedial Vaulting)

Remedial Vaulting

Remedial vaulting is a type of EAA/T, where the client or group does not ride independently, by guiding the horse with reins. The horse is guided by the practitioner/therapist via lunging, though it can to a certain extent react to what the client is doing. Remedial vaulting integrates psychosocial and cognitive elements. The rider

practices vaulting with the help of exercises and games with and on the horse. Unlike vaulting as an equestrian sport, remedial vaulting is not geared towards achieving the best possible gymnastics performance when carrying out an exercise. The aim is for the client to develop his abilities (in the context of psychomotor support) and to experience alternative courses of action (Specialisations in Equitherapy, 2014).

Specialist

A specialist is someone who is certified as a professional in his or her profession and gained extensive knowledge and skill relating to that job, or area of study. For example, it could mean a doctor who deals with health problems relating to a specific area of medicine. In this study, the term refers to someone who is an expert and certified in a health-related profession (Pooley, 1993).

Therapeutic Riding (TR)

Therapeutic Riding is a term used in several countries that refers to the use of horses and equine-assisted activities, to achieve goals that enhance physical, emotional, social, cognitive, behavioral and educational skills for people who have disabilities. Therapeutic riding focuses on both therapeutic riding skills and the development of a relationship between horse and rider. Therapeutic riding provides treatment for the individual, with the guidance of a trained equine assisted activity instructor/practitioner. Therapeutic riding is a treatment modality that uses the rhythmic movement of the horse to provide numerous physical benefits and psychological benefits. It is also strenuous aerobic activity stimulating a strong sense of mobility, power and control (Heipertz, 1989).

Western Style of Riding

Western Style of horseback riding evolved from ranching and warfare traditions brought to the American continent by Spanish conquistadors. The style has evolved to meet the needs of cowboy life in the American West. A cowboy working with his cattle needs to carry a lariat (lasso) and ride using only one hand on the reins. This style of riding encourages horses to have a certain degree of independence so that they can use natural instincts to follow the movements of a cow. The riding style emphasises a deep, secure seat in a large comfortable saddle. The horse is trained to be responsive on very light rein contact.

List of Abbreviations

ADHD Attention Deficit with Hyperactive Disorder

AL Active Learning

ASD Spectrum Disorder

BEF British Equestrian Federation

CP Cerebral Palsy

CPD Continued Professional Development

DE Delphi Expert

DM Delphi Method

EAA/T Equine Assisted Activities and or Therapy

FG Focus Groups

IEF Israel Equestrian Federation

IN Interviews

IST In-service Training

PBL Problem-Based Learning

PEP Prospective EAA/T Practitioner

PTSD Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

QR1 Question Responses, 1st Iteration

QR2 Question Responses, 2nd Iteration

RDA Riding for the Disabled Association

SQ Student Questionnaires

TCM Transmitted Curriculum Model

TL Transformative Learning

TR Therapeutic Riding

UKCC United Kingdom Coaching Certificate

WBL Work-Based Learning

WBP Work-Based Project

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Chapter One

Chapter 1: Background and Motivation for Research

1.1 Introduction

Equine Assisted Activities and Therapy (EAA/T) is a non-invasive therapeutic approach to human healing. For the past fifty years, it has experienced growth and popularity in forty-five countries. EAA/T is being used to help people who have various challenges, like Cerebral Palsy (CP), Attention Deficit with Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury, to cope with real-life issues (HETI, 2014).

However popular the EAA/T treatment modality has grown, in Israel, as well as in many other countries, people working in the field are now questioning the quality and effectiveness of the EAA/T training curricula for practitioners. Does the practitioner training meet the needs of clients and stakeholders? Are EAA/T curricula providing prospective EAA/T practitioners with opportunities to form new knowledge and build a strong practical experience? To answer these questions, a long overdue investigation was necessary to evaluate the Israeli EAA/T training curriculum and decide how to strengthen it.

1.2 Rationale and Objectives

The rationale of this research, my work-based project (WBP), was to determine the extent to which current educational practices prepare future EAA/T practitioners in Israel. With the rapid growth of the EAA/T industry for a subset of challenged learners, the number of EAA/T courses had increased, which according to medical and educational specialists and practitioners working in the field, resulted in less skilled practitioners entering the field, with less cohesion across the industry.

In response to this situation in 2008, an Israeli therapeutic riding committee comprising five experienced EAA/T practitioners including myself discussed the idea of standardising EAA/T academic training, building a National curriculum and establishing EAA/T rules and regulations which are found on the Israel Equestrian Federation Website (ief.org.il). To prepare a professional curriculum for academies in Israel required a full

investigation of the existing EAA/T curriculum, and what was expected of it in terms of its product the graduate EAA/T practitioner. Using my, medical experience as a British registered nurse, paediatric nurse, and health visitor, I felt I had an informed understanding of what was needed for challenged and disabled people in a non-invasive therapeutic intervention. This, along with three decades of EAA/T experience, and equestrian knowledge and skills, gave me the ability and foresight to research the Israeli curriculum. My exploration would be unique as it would shape up into a longitudinal study, a journey that could explore all aspects of the curriculum and how it impacts EAA/T practice and client care.

My six major objectives:

The first object was to evaluate the curriculum and find ways to improve it.

The second objective was to find out what colleagues, practitioners and experts in the field had to say about the curriculum. The study wanted to capture the voices of practitioners around the world. Among the participants were expert practitioners from twenty countries.

The third objective was to find out what were the principle topics and what would be the best way to teach them. The study asked questions about the perception of experts what should the rank order of topics should be.

The forth objective was to make recommendations for a future curriculum. The study explored topics currently being taught and the method employed to teach them.

The fifth objective was the investigation of various paradigm shifts that led to professionalisation of other occupations and the design and strategy for the professionalisation for EAA/T.

The sixth objective was to fuel interest in the research, and additional research, though dialogue with colleagues, experts and other stakeholders based on the findings. The study findings were to be disseminated globally to participants and the wider community of EAA/T experts and practitioners (Thomas and Hodges, 2010).

The objectives once fulfilled and the findings disseminated could stimulate global community into re assessing training curricula for Equine Assisted Activities and or Therapy (EAA/T)

During the period of exploration time there were specific events that confirmed my belief that this research study was crucial.

In 2011, after two years the Therapeutic Riding Professional Committee (TRCP) published the first book of rules and guidelines for EAA/T in Israel. Between 2011-2012, TRCP produced a written document recommending that candidates for training in EAA/T be accepted to training programmes based on profiling processes and published admission policies. These training programmes would adopt common minimum syllabi for all courses as well as a set of completion and evaluation requirements.

In 2012, a meeting was held for the first time, with all the directors of the eleven courses operating in Israel at that time. The purpose of the meeting was to explore the committee's recommendations and request cooperation to implement the recommendations. The recommendations were discussed, and, following discussion, several changes were made. It is noteworthy to say that there was a genuine desire for cooperation amongst the course directors. From this meeting the newly formed Therapeutic Riding Professional Committee put forward a plan asking the Ministry of Education and Sport and Health, to adopt a national curriculum, consistent standards, rules and regulations, records and evaluations to improve the quality of service and outcomes for challenged learners.

In 2012, the deputy director of the Ministry of Health agreed to meet with EAA/T representatives resulting in the appointment of a committee that included representatives of TRCP, the Equestrian Federation and the Ministry of Education and Sport, to discuss the legislative process in the field of EAA/T aimed at recognising therapeutic horseback riding as a profession. The purpose of the meeting was to investigate how EAA/T could achieve special status that would be recognised by the Ministries of Education, Sport and Health. The TRCP committee compiled detailed plans about course instruction, work supervision, and professional responsibility of EAA/T centres.

Unfortunately, this new advisory committee only met once in 2013 and since there have been no further discussions even though the TRCP has worked hard to convene another

meeting.

In 2013, representatives of TRCP were invited to a discussion with a panel of pediatricians who represented major medical insurance in Israel to further understand the benefits of EAA/T. Unfortunately following the meeting, pediatricians wrote recommendations that did not reflect the discussion and included recommendations **not to refer** children suffering from Attention Deficit with Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism and emotional difficulties to EAA/T programmes. They instead wrote a letter, which was published in two popular Israeli newspapers and on-line in English (Efrati, 2013) stating,

> *many instructors aren't properly trained and there is scant scientific proof of its medical benefits* (Efrati, 2013, p. 1; Appendix 21.ii).

Furthermore, in 2013 Israel's medical insurance companies introduced their own methods of profiling EAA/T practitioners because there was no such profile at that time. They specified that no qualified practitioner with less than one year of practical experience might treat children (up to age eighteen) who had been referred by that medical insurance group. Additionally, they expected Israeli practitioners to maintain records for inspection at the EAA/T centre. During inspection questions were posed about session planning, techniques used and the level of client progress in the clients' daily life.

The medical insurance companies' concerns, as evidenced by the letter published by the panel of Israeli paediatricians, along with the lack of response from the Ministries of Health and Education and Sport did draw the appropriate focus and prompted people to act. In fact, in 2014, an annual in-service training program commenced for mentor training and examiners. An experienced EAA/T practitioner was brought from the USA to tutor these courses. At the same time, however, the lack of support also instilled a level of fear in practitioners who were concerned that negative publicity would adversely impact clients' access to treatment (Efrati, 2013 in Appendix 21.i and 21.ii).

1.3 Aims of Work-Based Project (WBP)

The aim of this WBP was to identify and develop the most effective professional training for Equine Assisted Activities and or Therapy (EAA/T) practitioners, to build an optimal learning curriculum and provide additional practical experience to the trainers. It began by reviewing empirical data, collected from participating EAA/T practitioners and field experts. The aim of the research was to be original, ethical and effectively manage the scope of the central question and to confirm or refute previous findings from other EAA/T curriculum investigators, which were relevant to this research as well as examine and in turn provide research recommendations. It was intended to be well designed, accurate and apply valid enquiry methods. Data sources that come from both external retrospective data and internal perspectives were collected and identified. One aim of the research was to gain institutional support and provide informed recommendations for a future professional EAA/T curriculum. The recommendations included suggestions for core values, curriculum building that motivates active learning, medical and educational theory, and the application of theory to the practice of EAA/T. Another aim of the research was to build consensus in the community by defining a practitioners' profile and identifying stakeholder needs. Research findings will be disseminated via conferences, and through peer reviewed articles and social networking sites.

1.4 The Central Question of the Research

The research central question 'Equine Assisted Activities and Therapy (EAA/T) curriculum: Towards a Future Curriculum', was seeking to find out what is needed for a new future curriculum. Looking towards a **Future Curriculum** asked for a full exploration of contemporary issues that EAA/T practitioners and the practice were facing today.

The central question gave rise to a set of more specific research questions, which became framed by a discourse–centred approach generating naturally occurring debate, and providing critical information and curriculum recommendations for practitioners.

1.4.1 The Set of Research Questions

The research central question gave rise to a set of specific Research Questions:

- What knowledge and skills are prospective EAA/T practitioners (PEP) expected to learn?
- What learning standards and learning objectives are they expected to meet?
- What is the best teaching approach for the multidisciplinary topics?
- What must be done to the curriculum to meet the needs of practice?
- Is the curriculum teachable and does it have teachers and teaching methods and assignments that provide best practices for prospective EAA/T practitioners?
- What are the criteria for validating the EAA/T curricula?

At the core of this set of questions, two questions could be consistently asked: "Where are we now?" and "Where would we like to be?"

1.5 Questions Addressed by the Scope of the Research

From the central question, the following questions became the scope of my enquiry:

- What would strengthen a future EAA/T curriculum?
- What qualities must the EAA/T curriculum possess to ensure that it can make use of any recommendations suggested to prepare students for best practices in the arena?
- What recommendations can be made to benefit the training for PEP in their new role to ensure a triad between the horse, client and practitioner?
- Should pedagogic paradigms like Active Learning (AL) and Problem-Based Learning (PBL) be used to encourage students' curiosity, creativity and critical and reflective thinking skills?
- Can the EAA/T curriculum be extended to the workplace where Work-Based Learning (WBL) projects like 'In Service Training' (IST) can be used to maintain EAA/T practitioner accreditation?
- Can extending its boundaries to become an academic-based curriculum with quality assurance from universities guaranteeing professionalism and standards legitimise the EAA/T curriculum?

1.6 Scope of Work-Based Project (WBP)

So far there has not been an enquiry of this size and scope to investigate EAA/T curricula. In the 90's, Nolt, Brown, Spink and Tebay (1994) and Brown and Tebay (1994-1999), all EAA/T pioneers in the USA, and Pasquinelli and Papini (1997), pioneers in the field in Italy investigated college curricula, looking mainly at syllabi topics, standards and local organisational accreditation rather than at the actual curriculum. More recently Renker, Stalsburg and Turbeville (2012) carried out a similar investigation in the USA, generating new information about local organisation and academic standards, accreditation processes, and syllabi topics in the past, present and possibilities for the future.

This WBP went beyond choosing the best syllabi, topics and accreditation processes as it identified the nature and cause of weaknesses, so that recommendations could be made for a new future curriculum that could provide prospective EAA/T best practice in the field. The findings were the thrust of my enquiry. The flexibility of the qualitative research technique emphasised a constructive naturalistic approach enabling me to reach out to many experts whose common bond of interest in the field made for excellent consultation and involvement.

1.7 The Issue of Cultural Differences

The WBP raised the awareness of cultural sensitivities that could interfere with curriculum building and the educational process. For instance, 'Riding for the Disabled' in the UK is built on a culture of volunteerism, which presents challenges when meeting the demands of professional practice.

This research could only be affective for future curriculum building by including research from past, present and potential future approaches. Because of Israel's (limited) number of experts in the EAA/T field, I as the researcher, looked at current practices in major countries worldwide within a period of two years to ensure timely data collection. As part of my outreach, I used Internet Communicating Technology (ICT) as well as drawing secondary research from various trade and research journals worldwide. The research was both conducted and studied in English.

1.8 My Personal and Professional Justification for the Research

My personal justification for undertaking this research is that it fitted my humanistic psychological philosophy, which has provided me with personal satisfaction throughout my career by facilitating my continuous self-development and creating the possibility to focus my life on helping individuals to experience independence and a better quality of life. In the context of my working life it has helped me to understand why it has been my mission to contribute to the welfare of the community. It has given me an opportunity to understand the nature of humans and engage in the treatment of the problems that challenged them.

My professional justification for undertaking this research comes from my special understanding of the work of EAA/T practitioner. My career began in Britain where I worked as a registered nurse for ten years and specialised in pediatrics and obstetrics, and then for a further ten years as a health visitor. During that time, I developed a solid theoretical and practical understanding of pathologies and the manifestations of human challenges. Paralleling this Para-medical career, which was filled with curious knowledge with my passion for horses and success as an equestrian, I found that I had skills that could change the lives of many challenged and disabled people (Shkedi, 2012). Integrating medical knowledge, education and equestrian skills I was able to work as an Equine Assisted Activities Therapist (EAA/T) practitioner for challenged and disabled people who wish to receive equine activities or therapy.

Since 1985, after moving from Britain to Israel, and founding the treatment modality: Therapeutic Riding (TR) for the mentally and physically challenged. TR is the conventional name for Equine Assisted Activities/ Therapy (EAA/T) that includes both horseback riding and some form of groundwork and is the term used in this thesis. As an EAA/T practitioner I have had the perfect opportunity to express my values in a practical manner and help those who are challenged learn to cope with real-life issues through the companionship of horses. After three decades of practice I have established programmes aimed at rehabilitating traumatised war victims, and the remediation of challenged learners, as well as severely disabled children in an EAA/T setting. Working as an EAA/T practitioner has encouraged me to expand my thinking and my practice, and to found the first EAA/T diploma curriculum for TR practitioners. Since that time, I have administered

and developed EAA/T diploma courses in Israel. This research provided a forum to investigate the current curriculum. It gave me the opportunity to examine the curriculum looking for gaps that might be reducing the quality of training for prospective EAA/T practitioners.

1.9 Stages of the Independent Research

The central question of this qualitative naturalistic longitudinal research study was 'Equine Assisted Activities and Therapy: Towards a Future Curriculum'. This question generated additional research questions (p. 5), which were used to develop the scope of this enquiry. To answer the central question rich data was collected from different sites and at different stages of the research.

Stage one: The research began by conducting a **review of literature** that was relevant to the central question. This required synthesising global information from EAA/T curricula, comparing past and current provisions to potential provisions. The literature review enabled the historical analysis and identification of different curricula theories, as well as creating a context for understanding current educational curriculum needs. It was an opportunity to analyse the potency of several curriculum models to find the best approach for optimal integration of teaching and learning resources for Israeli curricula.

Stage two: To strengthen the literature review findings a robust research methodology was applied, the **Delphi Method,** which is designed as a multi staging technique that intersperses analysis with responses from participants. The Delphi Method began by collecting rich data from colleagues, EAA/T practitioners and stakeholders at different stages of their careers, and from different countries of the world. The collected insights gathered via focus groups (FG), interviews (IN) and student questionnaires (SQ) data were analysed and a comparison of the actual with potential performance was conducted. These independent findings along with the literature review findings were used to build the first questionnaire for stage three of the research.

Stage three: The Delphi Method became a uniquely vigorous enquiry when it questioned experts for their opinions via three rounds of questionnaires. The questionnaires were sent to a panel of EAA/T experts asking for their opinions regarding the emerging findings.

During each consecutive round, the questionnaire was amended, narrowing down factors, yet still reflecting on the research findings seeking to build a consensus among the experts. Stage three was completed when there was saturation of experts' thoughts and suggestions forming a collective consensus.

Stage four: Entering the final stages of the research, the findings were thematised into key findings. To ensure that the findings were justifiable, comparisons were made between the Delphi experts' collective observations and those of the other insights, obtained from focus groups, interviews and from the student questionnaire.

Stage five: To verify the strength of the key findings and make recommendations for the future, a process of triangulation took place between all the insights. Further the key findings were compared and substantiated by accessing other sources and the literature review. The research concluded with recommendations for the future, a review of the dissemination strategy and an evaluation of the sustainability of the new programme.

Chapter Two

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Core Concepts and Relevant Literature

This chapter critically reviewed relevant literature in order to underpin the argument that gaps exist in EAA/T curricula. Situating the research central question within a body of literature made it possible to identify, appraise, select and synthesise high quality evidence and arguments relevant to the question.

Before researching empirical data and reflecting upon possible influences in the context of the EAA/T curriculum, I begin the chapter by describing Equine Assisted Activities and Therapy (EAA/T)? Constructing a mind map, presenting subjects that could impact an EAA/T curriculum (Figure 2.2, p. 15). The mind map was instrumental in the selection process of the various EAA/T curriculum topics.

2.2 Equine Assisted Activities and Therapy

EAA/T encompasses a variety of activities, which can be classified into three major domains that include core concepts of **medicine, pedagogies** and **horsemanship**. Within the realm of the **medical** domain there are branches of equine assisted psychology and hippo-therapy that apply specific treatment methods aimed at healing physiological or neurological dysfunctions and improving certain psycho-physiological deficits (Heipertz, 1989). In **pedagogies,** there are specific treatment activities that benefit psycho-educational change (Heipertz, 1989). In **horsemanship,** there are specific activities that partner horse and rider for conditions of mutual success (Heipertz, 1989). The challenged rider trains in several psychophysical exercises to increase fitness, have fun and feel empowered (Heipertz, 1989).

From my experience as an educator and practitioner, unless the EAA/T curriculum implements concepts from all three domains, there are likely to be significant gaps in teaching and learning. Moreover, without a curriculum standard for those domains, the EAA/T student practitioner may not be sufficiently qualified to meet the clients' needs (See definitions: Equine Assisted Activities and Therapy).

Figure 2.1 below represents an 'Equine Assisted Activities/ Therapy (EAA/T) Curriculum Framework Model'. It provides the scope of an EAA/T curriculum. The circles surrounding and interlocking demonstrate how EAA/T is an intricate collaboration of multiple disciplines, which overlap and become equine assisted activities and therapy.

Figure 2.1: EAA/T Framework Model

The Equine Assisted Activities Framework Model encompasses all equine assisted activities and therapies. Accredited practitioners who have met the standards of their local EAA/T accrediting authority provide various services as seen in the framework model (Figure 2.1, p. 13). EAA/T practitioners can include horseback-riding specialists, psychologists, educationalists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech language pathologists, nurses and doctors. All practitioners need experience in equestrianism and human-horse relationships.

Equestrianism refers to the art of riding in multiple disciplines, like dressage, jumping, vaulting, handball, polo and cross-country. Many of these disciplines are purposely used as Equine Assisted Activities and Therapy (EAA/T) contributing positively to the cognitive, physical, emotional and social well-being of challenged individuals.

Equestrianism provides challenged individuals with benefits in the areas of health, education, sport and recreation and leisure (See definitions: Equestrianism).

Horsemanship teaches a person how to safely interact with horses. Safe contact means developing awareness and attention to behavioural cues given by horses. Professional and non-professional persons handling horses should have sufficient knowledge to development and maintain a positive human/horse relationship. They must understand that deficits in management conditions (housing, food, social context, and training) may lead to disturbances in the horse's behaviour and ultimately to relational problems (Hausberger, et al., 2008). (See definitions: Horsemanship).

By leveraging human/horse connections EAA/T practitioners encourage the challenged to find their personal power, control, body and spatial awareness, and general physical fitness, thus improving memory, linguistic agility and other higher cognitive functions (Shkedi, 2012). Many thousands of challenged children and adults reap the rewards of equine-assisted activities therapy (Mullen, 2010).

Evidence continues to accumulate as more rigorously controlled studies are being conducted resulting in a significant body of literature supporting the therapeutic value of the human/horse connection and interactions, (Panksepp, 2011). Brown (2010) in her thesis discusses the discursive construction of guided human equine interactions, putting up a convincing argument that horses add to the spirit of healing. Panksepp (2011), a research scientist who has studied the emotions of animals, suggests that it is possible for humans to create a trans-species mental bridge which can be used to support various human stress disorders such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Other researchers have reported EAA/T successes: Pendry and Roeter (2013), Schultz, Remick-Barlow and Robbins (2007), Masters (2012), Shurtleff, Standeven, Engsberg (2009), Thelle (2010), and Fan, Smith, Kielfner, Taylor (2010). These articles document EAA/T as a successful treatment modality for psychophysical disorders in children and adults who have a wide range of conditions: Psychiatric disorders, psychomotor developmental delay, neurological and muscular diseases, cystic fibrosis, Downs Syndrome, ASD, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADHD) and terminal illnesses like cancer and Multiple Sclerosis (Bronson et al., 2010; Shkedi, 2012). Still, the public and many EAA/T stakeholders are not convinced that EAA/T is a useful/successful treatment modality. It is not widely accepted as a non-invasive holistic technique for remediation and rehabilitation, as the

discipline lacks sufficient documented evidence as to the validity of the therapy (Parish-Plass, 2013). Brown (2009) proposed that EAA/T was still insufficiently evidence-based. She maintained that an even more rigorous analytical approach to research was necessary to justify EAA/T and explicate the reasons why it had not made that essential leap to become publicly recognised as a valid treatment for the challenged. Anestis, Anestis, Zawilinski, Hopkins and Lilienfeld (2014) examined the quality of findings in peer reviewed articles and came to the conclusion that

> *studies were compromised with substantial threats to validity…that current evidence does not justify equine related treatments for mental disorders* (Anestis, et al., 2014, p. 1115).

Figure 2.2 below indicates the possible subjects that are relevant to any EAA/T curriculum. This mind map acted as a useful guide for empirical research, data and future gap bridging decision analysis.

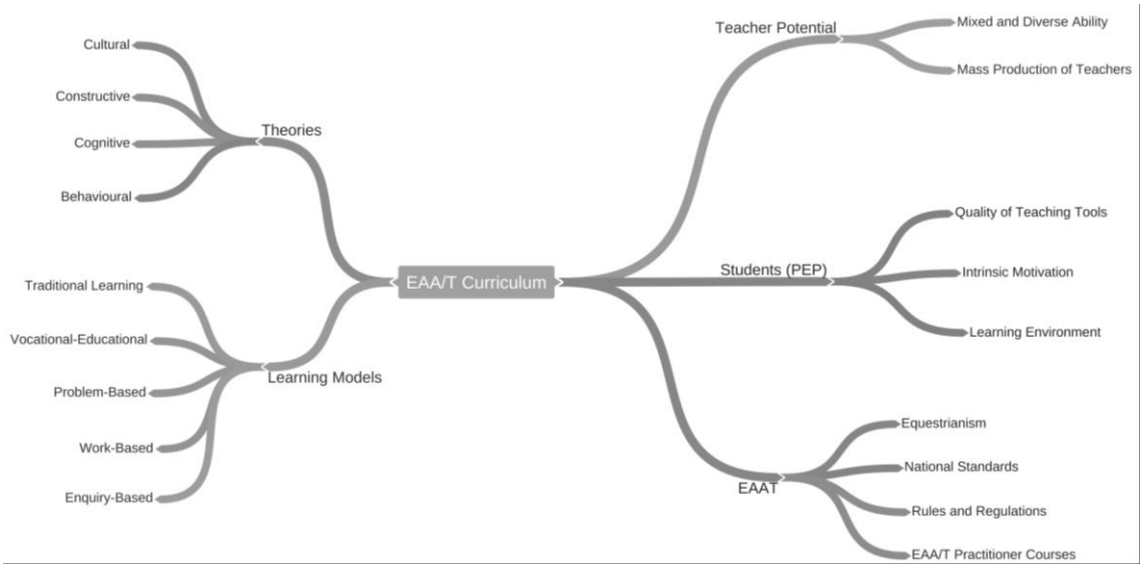

Figure 2.2: Perspectives and Procedures that Impact and Contribute to EAA/T Curricula Quality

2.3 Historical Summary / Need for EAA/T Standards

It was worthwhile reviewing the origins of EAA/T when looking for gaps in an EAA/T curriculum. Historical literature traced the evolution of EAA/T when the horse became entwined in the odyssey of man and important theories and techniques in human-horse

bonding were uncovered. According to many human/horse practitioners, developing human-horse bonding is the only way to practice EAA/T. Selby (2011) and Lentini, Knox and McCauley (2007) argued that a horse can impact a child's behaviour expanding his or her relational, self-and empathic skills. In order for EAA/T to impact a child's behaviour they suggested a balanced multidisciplinary approach, a combination of medicine, pedagogies and equestrian skills. However, according to existing training models, this situation is not the norm. EAA/T is perhaps losing sight of overlapping expertise in the three domains, medicine, pedagogies and equestrian, as well as diminishing the role of equestrianism in the human-horse bond. The human-horse bond was well described by Panksepp's (2011) cross-species neuroscience research, which decisively demonstrated that, since both humans and horses are conscious feeling beings, the interaction between the two forges a profound bonded relationship potentially healing and positively transforming the human.

Around 2,300 BC, Xenophon wrote the oldest extant work on The Art of Horsemanship, translated by Morgan (1962). He suggested a good horseman required excellent equestrian skills. Xenophon used a controlled behaviourist-teaching model, which is still regarded as the best way to learn equestrian skills. Xenophon based his ideas on a mechanistic imitation of his model-teachers, exemplifying them, he maintained, was the only way to achieve high standards. Equestrian skills are central to EAA/T practice, and it is noteworthy to say that in the best Equestrian schools only experienced educators with expertise can guide prospective instructors in equestrian skills and horsemanship (Sivewright, 1994). EAA/T's current drift away from these equestrian high standards could represent a knowledge, teaching and venue gap for all curricula (Better facilities for 2013-2017, British Equestrian Federation).

According to Trippett (1974), around the time 3000-2300 BC, the first horsemen were the Scythians- a nomadic illiterate people. They portrayed a human-horse model that sought to supply an enquiry orientated developmental approach, where horse training provided a balance between action and reflection and succeeded in developing human growth and selfhood. Today many specialists working in EAA/T are applying humanistic techniques to improve the wellbeing of the challenged (Klontz et al., 2007; Brown, 2010). EAA/T curricula should have the means to teach prospective EAA/T practitioners how to advance a challenged learners' personal growth and development through equestrian

skills (Lujan, 2012). Both the Xenophon and the Scythian models required in-depth core equestrian knowledge, which they believed was the only way to achieve exemplary results. Today, except for Germany, countries practicing EAA/T don't require mandatory riding instructor qualifications or knowledge of human-horse bonding techniques (PATH Intl., ief.org.il; Role Profile, RDA, 2014).

From ancient times to the second half of the twentieth century the evangelists of EAA/T were medical experts with equine skills who prescribed and facilitated EAA/T for various maladies and physical disabilities (Riede, 1988). According to Riede (1988), a Doctor of Science and Medicine, the first recorded treatment utilising the horse occurred in 430BC. This was when Hippocrates, the first physician, who had knowledge of horsemanship, could make this prescription (Riede, 1988). Today, stakeholders expect EAA/T practitioners to have the abilities of Hippocrates and multi-task, which is act as paramedics, psycho-educationalists and horsemen. Currently, most curricula run far short of this level of training and provide only an introduction to pathologies, manifestations, equestrian practice and skills (RDA, UK, 2014; PATH Intl., 2014).

2.4 EAA/T in Contemporary Times

Viewing EAA/T in the context of contemporary times (from the 1970s) provided a deeper understanding of what are the current needs for practice (Chavasse, 2001). EAA/T evolved in two directions in two different countries. In the United Kingdom (UK) EAA/T evolved as an Adapted Sports Model, under the umbrella of an organisation called Riding for the Disabled (RDA). In Germany, it developed as a more clinical model under the auspices of the German Kuratorium (Deutsches Kuratorium, 2014). The philosophical backgrounds of these two approaches were diametrically opposed, but there was a rationale that unified both models. Both emphasised equestrian knowledge and skills, and a desire that students would gain in-depth horsemanship skills. The British Model promoted mental and physical wellbeing through riding as a recreational sport, while the German model, using the properties of the horse, relied on a medical and psycho-educational orientation.

In the 1960's an American model evolved from both the UK and German models. It took a more eclectic approach to EAA/T combining elements from the previous two models

as it added educational goals (Engel, 1992). The American model founded in 1969, grew through two national organisations, the Certified Horsemanship Association, and the North American Riding for the Handicapped Association (NARHA), which currently is known as Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl., 2014). The American model provided EAA/T practitioners greater opportunity by encouraging free enterprise and individualism. It allowed them to build knowledge through their own perspectives and interpretations of their working reality and practice. However, this laissez-faire approach distanced itself from entry guidelines and the development of national standards, fragmenting curriculum professionalism, and causing EAA/T stakeholders to lose sight of the validity of EAA/T as a treatment method (Engel, 1992). Renker, Stalsburg and Turbeville, (2012) who investigated EAA/T qualifications and certification in the USA, found that organisations were membership driven, maintaining that

> *specialty certification was developed to meet the needs of the organization and criteria and standards were determined through committee consensus* (Renker et al., 2012, p. 3).

Memberships that create certification can drive a relational gap between the accreditation process, the product and the output of the training courses. The certification process is linked to membership and distracts organisational focus away from the development of skills needed with practice of EAA/T and places it on yearly membership growth.

Cultural attitudes and curriculum debates prevented the British and German models from implementing any progressive innovations or siseable policy shifts. The British model was firmly fixed in the equestrian camp and argued that learning how to horseback ride was in itself therapy. In 1998, Hatton-Hall pioneered the RDA, along with Claridge, a RDA physiotherapist who proposed the UK qualification scheme (Hatton-Hall and Claridge, 1998). Together, Hatton-Hall and Claridge argued for the British model, suggesting its uniqueness was its culture of volunteerism and that it centred on teaching the art of riding, which they believed to be therapeutic and holistic. Unlike some other countries, they did not perceive therapy as the essential element of EAA/T. However, there was an apparent gap between what was said and what was done, as the British model did not require EAA/T practitioners to have riding skills as part of the training, or qualifications (RDA, UK, 2014). Still these inconsistencies or training gaps did not

dampen the enthusiasm of the highly motivated UK adult volunteer work force (Volunteer, 2012) taking part in the process.

The German model differed considerably as it demanded specialisation, scientific rigour and riding instructor qualifications prior to practice. Specialists received Government monetary rewards for practice, which encouraged an entrepreneurial approach towards their patients. At present, this philosophical perspective and value base is unworkable for an Israeli model, as students are not requested to enter any EAA/T course with prerequisite specialisations in healthcare, medicine or education. Still, the German Model remains noteworthy as it has been successful and does offer research opportunities.

As the USA model took a more eclectic approach combining the German and British models, it could include an academic competency-based curriculum for practitioners. Brown and Tebay (1999a), pioneers of contemporary EAA/T, argued for this more formal competency-based training model in a university setting as they were convinced that EAA/T had matured sufficiently to merit it. They argued for raising the bar and for the introduction of professional standards, training, and course accreditation. They drew similarities to the nursing profession, which sought policies in the USA that provided assurance of consistently trained personnel who were working in uniformly recognised settings (Brown and Tebay, 1999a). In their effort to find the most professional EAA/T curriculum they proposed that it was essential to identify the credentials needed for certification as an EAA/T practitioner (Brown and Tebay, 1999a). Carrying out the first critical examination of an EAA/T practitioner-training curriculum, they argued that validation must derive from university training models. Brown and Tebay (1999a) placed the problems of EAA/T curricula in the context of broader scholarly literature. They suggested that the EAA/T curricula lacked integration with the medical community, and inclusion of more sophisticated learning methodologies from education and medicine, which had become an integral part of curricula in other respected therapeutic professions, such as psychotherapy and special education (Engel, 1992). The results of their investigation verified that EAA/T practitioners would benefit from more educational opportunities, but because of their inherently recreational background of EAA/T in the USA, only a few advanced training courses were offered and no national curriculum was suggested (Brown and Tebay, 1999b).

Essentially, Brown and Tebay (1999a), who never finished the quest to achieve EAA/T validation, posed some key questions: Who is qualified to teach EAA/T university courses? What credentials should experts possess? What specific study subjects are required? What examinations and qualifications are used? What is the profile of an EAA/T practitioner? These questions are as relevant today as they were then, and clearly point to content areas that, if not clarified, represent the very curriculum gap they were trying to close.

Historically, the three approaches dating to ancient times reflected training techniques that could achieve best teaching practices. The Xenophon (Greek Model) (Mogan, 1993) chose a behaviourist approach, which required **good educators and high values**, whereas the Scythians (Nomadic Model) (Trippett, 1974) took a **humanistic holistic** approach towards the human-horse bond. Hippocrates (Riede, 1988) used medical knowledge of pathologies as his guide to the human/horse therapeutic process. Noteworthy commonalities between the models were **expertise, the human/horse connection and knowledge.** Both trainers and physicians promoted high standards and the importance of education and knowledge were considered essential for any success EAA/T curriculum.

In contemporary times literature revealed that UK, German and USA models were initially weakened by cultural attitudes, which focused on their own biases, with limited consideration for the therapeutic process. The British volunteerism-based model focused on recreational riding, preventing the desire for professionalism and for a return to the old ways. A significant gap remained between the required graduate qualifications (no riding exam necessary), and the expectations of the educators who maintained that the UK model was teaching riding skills to the disabled (Hatton-Hall and Claridge, 1998).

As the American model progressed from its entrepreneurial laissez faire background, it continued to allow anyone to participate in EAA/T training courses regardless of personal profile, or justification to practice. Even when academic courses were introduced the only profiling that took place was for University entrance, and not for EAA/T representing an admission gap (St Andrews Presbyterian University, 2014).

The German model, which was both entrepreneurial and scientific did provide EAA/T practitioners with monetary gains, education and/or healthcare experience (Kluwer in

Engel, 1992) but demonstrated little regard for EAA/T as a holistic approach. The emphasis was on professionalism and not on the human – horse bond (Stickney, 2010).

However, the commonalities that bound these three contemporary models together did provide in part, data for the enquiry conducted within the scope of my thesis. There was **consensus that training was essential, and syllabi and standards should be defined.** Still, the models did not sufficiently acknowledge that EAA/T practitioners must be able to maintain quality control and accountability in order to meet client therapeutic needs (Morley, 2010). Gaps existed between the requirements for educators and teaching programmes. Cultural pressures prevented each approach from making the shift towards the principles of therapeutic practice and motivating an operational workforce. Any future curriculum could be jeopardised if these issues are not clarified and addressed. In the next section EAA/T in Israel is reviewed in its historical context.

2.5 Historical View of EAA/T in Israel

So far literature review revealed that there were gaps in admission policies, expertise, quality of training, experience and the necessary structure and standards of EAA/T practitioner training. The inability to implement recommendations made by experts in the field of EAA/T has left several systemic gaps that must be addressed before any new future curriculum could be effective.

In this section the research reviews the Israeli EAA/T curriculum in its historical context. Illuminating Israel's historical model could reveal why some out-of-date theories, unproductive practices, biases, and opinions, are still operational, and could cause significant gaps between the current and the desired national curriculum.

In Israel, the growth of EAA/T, which is still conventionally known as Therapeutic Riding, was in part achievable because of the political, educational, social and cultural changes that have occurred since the country's declaration of independence in 1948. The development of a new democratic state made it possible to introduce new ideas in many spheres including the provision of care. One such new idea has been the changing attitude toward holistic medicine and healthcare praxis (Ben-Yishay and Diller, 2008). Having said that, the naissance of Israeli EAA/T did not formally begin until 1985 when, after settling in Israel I positioned myself in a new role as EAA/T practitioner. I introduced

EAA/T as a new and unique holistic therapeutic approach designed to support people with a broad-spectrum of challenges. The first recorded successful EAA/T rehabilitation programme was instituted after the Israel/Lebanon war in 1984 when I started to treat a veteran soldier who was left paralysed from the chest downwards because of an injury. I treated the soldier using EAA/T principles and practices. This significant experience solidified my conviction that there was a place for EAA/T in Israel, and convinced many of my colleagues as well. In the words of this veteran soldier, '*If you can help me, then you can help many others in Israel'* (Mitzvah Hero, video, 2009).

In 1985, I applied EAA/T for the first time in a special needs school situated on a kibbutz. Taking a small pony to a class of challenged learners I was able to conduct a motivating learning experiment. As the children learned about another sentient being, the horse, they felt empowered and motivated making it possible for them to reach a new level of mathematical competence. On request, they brought a specified number of apple portions for a pony. The children remained relaxed, focused and performed the task correctly. Wu (2003) would argue that this method of motivating learning builds positive attitudes towards learning. From the school's viewpoint, this methodology was less formal and more student-centred and focused on each learner's intrinsic characteristics, meaning, characteristics that existed regardless of any situation or circumstance (Edwards and Lambert, 2007). This simple yet powerful holistic human horse experiment was a humbling experience. Since then the school has included EAA/T in the curriculum as an alternative pedagogy.

Culturally, Israeli society is both individualistic and collectivistic rendering it open to ideas that affect personal values, the home and family as well as academic achievement, religious observance, and the unity of the extended family (Mautner, 2011). Still, early socialisation of Israeli children rarely included any form of active animal bonding and certainly no one considered introducing horses as a healthy approach to treating the disabled. In 1986, after the preliminary introduction of EAA/T into the special school, it was overwhelming to witness so many parents requesting EAA/T for their challenged children. Almost concurrently, cultural changes were taking place among the challenged and disabled, as they became increasingly aware that they could participate in activities typically reserved for the able-bodied, and it was during this time that several challenged adults reported significant life changes after interacting with a horse. One social worker

had suffered from a form of cerebral palsy affecting his entire body, making it impossible for him to stand alone, let alone walk. After participating in several EAA/T sessions he wrote:

> *I am writing this testimony to express my feeling and thoughts on horseback riding for the disabled. I can imagine that mounting a horse is a moving experience for an able-bodied person, but when one is disabled it is an unbelievable feeling of achievement. As a child I often fantasized about riding a horse, and when I was a young student, I would picture a disabled girl on a horse, I became determined that one day I would ride. My dream comes true…* (Appendix 20.i).

In 1986, still bearing a traditional positivistic view after receiving classical training in equestrian skills, healthcare and education in the UK, I began practicing the principles of EAA/T in Israel, consistent with the British RDA model. For example:

> *Every Rider must, while mounted, must wear well-fitting headgear of up-to-date BSI-approved standard or alternative head protection suitable for disability* (The RDA Official Manual, 1990, p. 62).

By adopting the British standards of safe practice one insurance company ventured to be among the first to provide insurance to a 'pioneer' like myself.

2.5.1 Development of Accreditation and Public Endorsement

By 1988 EAA/T was pursued in Israel by the Wingate Institute of Physical Education and Sport, which recognised both its popularity and market value. After initiating and then executing an adapted British version of an EAA/T training programme for three years, the Wingate Institute took hold of this good idea and proposed the first EAA/T curriculum leading to the award of the first EAA/T diploma, which was known as a 'Diploma in Therapeutic Riding'. The regulatory powers accepted the curriculum and moved to standardise EAA/T training. By establishing this diploma course Wingate was no longer free to follow any path that appealed to it. Other providers of EAA/T training were required to adopt the new curriculum. A body of literature had to be established, and

ultimately scientific research undertaken, so that results could be published and subsequently applied in an increasingly specialised way to formalise EAA/T training.

The founding curriculums gave me, as an educator, the opportunity to operationalise my views, and decide upon an eclectic model based on a more constructive theory. Employing techniques from all the models described so far (p. 13), allowed me to build a four-part curriculum dedicated to healthcare, pedagogies, equestrianism, and principles of practice. The curriculum's overriding aim was to address the needs of the challenged and their families as well as those of the public at large. However, it did not focus sufficiently on the needs of PEPs.

The first public endorsement of EAA/T came from Snir, (1988), an Israeli rehabilitation doctor, who had observed the benefits of EAA/T in Germany during his training. He acknowledged in a press release that EAA/T was recommended as a therapeutic treatment modality. This public endorsement led to a further demand for more practitioners and therapeutic riding centres (Snir, 1988) in Appendix 19.i). Snir (1988) accepted the role of health care educator for the first EAA/T diploma course and became the first examiner for its theoretical exam. His endorsement, along with his and others' willingness to teach their specialties in the diploma course, reinforced the EAA/T programme. Eventual endorsement of the curriculum by several other colleges started to advance the view in the eyes of the public that EAA/T could be an alternative pedagogy for challenged learners.

In 2007 a special needs school director who had critical consciousness and a liberating and emancipating viewpoint, identified EAA/T as an alternative pedagogy, which could contribute to his students' growth and selfhood (David (pseudonym), personal interview 2007). This approach resonated with Freire's (1974) critical consciousness concept and focused on achieving an in-depth understanding of the world, allowing for perception and exposure of social and political contradictions (Freire and Macedo, 1986). Critical consciousness embraces taking action against oppressive elements, the challenges in one's life, and that action helps clarify and promotes the understanding of those challenges. David (pseudonym), emulating the work of other educationalists, Edwards and Lambert (2007) and Wangeci (2009), recognised that complex educational goals can be achieved through a simplistic formula. In this case EAA/T, which reduces education's positivistic

epistemology from complex phenomena to simple, neutral, objective and universal standards could change learning opportunities for challenged learners.

During a twelve-year period in Israel, the EAA/T curriculum model moved towards a humanistic growth model that requires training in pedagogies, healthcare and medicine, not dissimilar to the original German model, however, unlike the German model there was no government validation and only limited organisational checks and balances, or attempt at evaluating the developmental process facilitated by EAA/T. There was little dialogue between academies and EAA/T practitioners and stakeholders that could have ensured the course contained the necessary knowledge and skills, and options for further development. Essentially, the questions originally posed by Brown and Tebay (1994) were still not answered. What were the best discourse and topics for preparing for practice, and what kind of equestrian skills are needed for professional practice?

It is noteworthy to say that an Israeli Law passed in 1988 for sports regulation did not influence the equestrian world 'until it came into effect a decade later' (Gazit, 2012, p. 3). In 1997 the Wingate Institute for Physical Education and Sport magazine reported sections of the Law, which stated all sports trainers including horseback riding trainers must be accredited. However, there was no mention of EAA/T or working with disabled persons in sport other that sporting participants required a medical health certificate. EAA/T training was left unchecked and consequently it fell between the cracks of national standards and governance (*Ministry of Education Culture and Sport, Act, 582810* (1997).

To begin the next step, public endorsement and accreditation of EAA/T needed evidence–based research.

2.5.2 Research and Development

Only specialist healthcare providers conducted EAA/T research in Israel. No EAA/T practitioner was included even though they were the field experts routinely providing and facilitating EAA/T. All research was medically oriented with academic preparation, theoretical foundation and practical experience. However, the research took a reductive approach (looking at specific parts and not the whole) and often failed to support the holistic humanistic characteristics of EAA/T because the EAA/T practitioners' input was excluded. Asay and Lambert (1999) would have argued that the whole is very important

if one wants to achieve a therapeutic change. A practitioner must take into consideration a client's ego strength and other homeostatic mechanisms as well as his or her environment. Bartunek (2007) understood that it was beneficial for academics and practitioners to work together to elevate research and practice. If academics and practitioners had the opportunity to

> *go back and forth into each other's world without casting their own* worlds aside (Bartunek, 2007, p. 1330).

She imagined the result would be very productive, integrating and building an exciting relationship between academia and practice. If prospective EAA/T practitioners could receive an education that bridged the gap between theory and practice perhaps they might find it easier and rewarding to cross the divide. If the divide were strong enough then, both academics and EAA/T practitioners would be able to use the bridge for evidence-based best practice.

Primarily, research in Israel was carried out by a group of sport medicine doctors (Snir, Dlin, Aylon, Yazdi, and Inbar, 1988) who investigated the effect of EAA/T upon children with minimal brain dysfunction and cerebral palsy. Challenged learners with neurological dysfunctions aged 13-15 were offered EAA/T twice weekly. Physical, bio mechanical and psychomotor studies were conducted on the strength and gait analysis posturography (an umbrella term used to describe a technique used to quantify postural control in the upright position in either static or dynamic conditions). However, the medical practitioners made no reference to the horse or the role of the EAA/T practitioner in the findings, which were the applications catalyst, essential components of the research.

Roditty (1998), an Israeli psychologist, investigated the influence of EAA/T treatments on children with learning disabilities and conductive disorders. During his treatment sessions, he built a triangular relationship between horse - practitioner (psychologist) - client that yielded new transferrable life skills for use in other environments, but his approach reduced the role of the EAA/T practitioner to **horse caretaker**, indicating once again the belief that EAA/T practitioners had insufficient knowledge to contribute to the therapeutic process. If EAA/T practitioners were given adequate educational opportunities, via a validated professional curriculum, then negative attitudes could be addressed by raising the curriculum bar. Zadnikar and Kastrin (2011), from the Centre of

Education and Rehabilitation for Children and Adolescents with Special Needs and the Institute of Medical Genetics, Ljubljana, Slovenia, argued for EAA/T practitioners receiving special training to ensure the implementation of safe and effective, multifaceted lesson plans for the challenged learner.

Unlike my own academic enquiry in 2003, where an EAA/T humanistic paradigm was used to construct knowledge about the use of new skills in the treatment of the physically challenged, the research examples demonstrated a lack of EAA/T practitioner input as a critical part of the treatment process. The medical researchers lacked recognition of an EAA/T practitioner special role in human-horse bonding. They failed to recognise that EAA/T's holistic humanistic characteristics can only be achieved when the **EAA/T practitioner's role is not reduced to horse handler.** If future curricula provide prospective EAA/T practitioners (PEPs) with thought provoking academic discourse and topics, they could be equipped with knowledge of pathologies and therapeutic skills associated with humanistic learning paradigms. PEPs could then develop expertise to become specialists in their own right, which would expand the perceived and actual value of all EAA/T practitioners (Shkedi, 2003). Kreindler and Kreindler (2012) who researched the outcomes and practice of Therapeutic Riding (TR) in which students diagnosed with Attention Deficit with Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) participated, presented a paper at a HETI world conference showing that EAA/T practitioners needed more education in order to apply their skills to support the transfer process experienced by the client. If, in the future, curricula raised the educational bar for knowledge, skills and its application, the EAA/T practitioner would be able to provide and facilitate therapeutic activities that could meet the needs of their clients, and be able to participate in evidence-based research.

The next section took an in-depth view of current EAA/T curriculum models to see what can be learned from their applications. Practitioners and educators should constantly re-evaluate and adjust EAA/T training curricula to satisfy the needs of contemporary society.

2.6 Alternative Approaches to EAA/T: Three Foundation Models

It seemed prudent, after studying the evolution of the EAA/T curriculum and three naissance models from Britain, Germany and America, to take a more in-depth view of

the current versions of the EAA/T curriculum to determine whether they have found the perfect solutions for the needs of the EAA/T profession (Gannod, Gannod and Henderson, 2005). The British, German and American models have served many thousands of challenged riders for the past 40 years. Today these models have a global reach affecting training in several countries. The British approach influenced practitioners in Canada, Australia, Japan and Hong Kong. The German approach influences all EAA/T activities in Europe, including Scandinavia, Finland and Estonia. The American model is fast becoming an international training model and is affecting EAA/T training in Taiwan, Turkey, South Korea and in the South Americas. Until now all three models have focused on curriculum content rather than outcomes. In other words, these models have emphasised the established system, organisational standards, rules and regulations rather than PEP profiles, personal needs and training outcomes, which are all important components for the preparation of good practice. Today, EAA/T stakeholders require students to have a broad-based education that ensures competencies in core areas, therapeutic skills, and the ability to research and develop new ideas. Reviewing and analysing current day versions of these models and their established syllabi and methodologies does identify and reaffirm gaps and weaknesses that could negatively affect a future curriculum model in Israel. According to Mezirow (1991), an educationalist who championed transformative learning, actively reflecting on past knowledge about curriculum designs from different cultures, backgrounds and beliefs helps formulate conclusions and strategies about the current curriculum construction, and that is the primary intention here.

2.7 American Model

In examining the literature, the American model appears to have grown from an entrepreneur laissez-faire approach starting in the sixties where a plethora of innovative EAA/T applications had a profound impact on the equine industry and equine education (Mullen, 2010). Initially the approach focused on horseback riding as a technique to facilitate change in children and adults with various disabilities that negatively affected psychophysical and intellectual development such as Attention Deficit with Hyperactivity Disorder (Basile, 1997) and Cerebral Palsy (Bertoti, 1988). Gradually the approach evolved into a multitude of different equine related activities for therapeutic purposes, collectively known as EAA/T. Currently the method provides an EAA/T service to tens

of thousands of individuals annually by leveraging the power of the horse. The American approach to EAA/T is divided into three major domains: National Therapeutic Riding Organisations, Academies and a Hippo-therapy Organisation. All three domains collaborate with TR centres for experiential learning as well as on-line learning, providing student practitioners with flexible and accessible practical experience and on-line learning on or off site. This investigation will focus only on National Therapeutic Riding Organisations and the Academies exploring content, programme and courses to determine what may be relevant to this enquiry. However, it is significant to mention that even though National Riding Organisations and academies are the main domains for EAA/T in the USA, several smaller operational domains are emerging that offer several specialised options: Equine Facilitated Learning, which is generally associated with the Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association (Eagala) and Equine Protection of North America (Epona). These domains are becoming more significant as the sentiment of both represents a shift in approach to specialisation, which is becoming increasingly popular with stakeholders. However, like all American EAA/T domains remain, limited by being membership-based, and rely on committee consensus to make their own rules and regulations (Renker et al., 2012). As no national or international governing body exists to control EAA/T's core values or ethical standard, serious questions could be raised about these domains: the level of equine knowledge, client safety and the adequate understanding of the horse and its welfare.

2.7.1 American Model: National Organisation Approach

The Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International (PATH Intl.) is the USA's largest non-profit EAA/T organisation in the USA and will be the one discussed in this study. Continually growing, today, PATH Intl. has nearly 800 member centres and over 6,300 individual members worldwide, who help and support more than 42,000 men, women and children with special needs each year through a variety of equine-assisted activities and therapy programmes (PATH Intl., 2014). At present the PATH Intl. approach requires practitioners to be either licensed paramedical therapists and/or riding instructors. Accreditation is achieved via licensed therapeutic riding programmes throughout the USA with on-line testing by way of Internet Computer Technology (ICT) for theoretical exams. Path uses a hierarchical approach to accreditation with three certification levels. The first is Instructor certification, then

Advanced, and then the Masters level (PATH Intl. Curriculum, 2014). The National Organisation model promotes EAA/T through four primary programme areas: instructor certification, centre accreditation, educational opportunities and advocacy work. It is noteworthy that a prerequisite for the programme is twenty- five hours of volunteering experience. To maintain licensing and accreditation, instructors must participate in in-service training by attending two workshops annually. The syllabus includes an introduction to various important EAA/T topics such as the historical background of EAA/T, anatomy, physiology, pathologies and psychology as well as some elementary horsemanship, mastery of instructing, lesson-planning techniques, administration of the TR centre and practicum (PATH Intl. Curriculum, 2014). Generally, practitioners study EAA/T via the PATH Intl. curriculum in therapeutic riding (TR) centres where it is possible to access some authentic practical experience. However, based on the advertised curriculum this national organisation model at registration level provides limited topic information and only twenty-five hours of practical experience. Generally, at all levels PATH Intl. curricula appear to omit the contribution of experts from the education and health-care fields, or engage with available various pedagogic learning paradigms, thus limiting the formation of knowledge and its application during the course.

2.7.2 American Model: Academic Approach

In 1997 the first academic course for EAA/T became operational at St. Andrews Presbyterian College, in North Carolina and Pennsylvania State University. This was the prelude to several other academic institutions offering EAA/T programmes or affiliating themselves to EAA/T national organisation. For instance, Centenary College, NJ, incorporated the EAA/T experience as part of their BSc Equine Studies programme and has its own TR centre (Centenary College, NJ, USA) for practical experience. Other academies affiliated with local EAA/T centres for practical sessions (Delaware University collaborates with Southern Delaware, TR centre, USA). Today there are 39 colleges and universities in the USA providing EAA/T programmes, with seven offering four-year degree courses (Mullen, 2010; Renker et al., 2012).

The academic model is based on higher learning and facilitates academic achievement. According to university information, the American Academic Model (AAM) is described as a high quality, student-centred, results oriented, educational opportunity that is

accessible, affordable and relevant. To achieve its overarching goals, the academy articulated assumptions, values and expectations that constituted the core of its academic model (St Andrews Presbyterian University, 2014). Using a multi competency approach, the AAM applies theory to practical experience, where learning activities form explicit links between the crucial abilities of the student practitioner: critical thinking, self-exploration, and ethical practice. It provides orientation, training, mentoring and coaching to foster and empower learning. It also provides up-to-date knowledge and practical skills required in the workplace, as well as a framework for continued development. It makes high-quality learning opportunities as accessible and responsive as possible to meet the needs of a diverse student population. It includes supporting students with differing levels of educational and experiential background.

Hypothetically the AAM seems ideal and represents more value than the National Organisation Model whose only base for practitioner training is the TR centre. By leveraging their ties to practitioners, fellow students, resources, the community and alumni, additional benefits that include more work options for students are created. The AAM can provide EAA/T students with extensive university facilities and access to vast information resources to be enjoyed in an open atmosphere. Implementing EAA/T learning in a non-commercial environment enables an emphasis on lifelong student-centred learning and development (Lieb, 1991). The curricularisation and significant expansion of curriculum flexibility allows greater scope for individual learning. The academic world can potentially strengthen the EAA/T programme through inter-institutional cooperation, which includes sharing qualified staff and resources. Finally, many institutions for higher education that have a successful brand image attract potential employers of new graduate practitioners (Zhou, Yang and Hui, 2010).

Considering the data, the AAM could be the way of the future, but there are still gaps preventing it from producing the best operatives. It still lacks a clear method of profiling EAA/T trainees. Universities employ a common admission format for academia, without any special reference to EAA/T requirements, such as equestrian knowledge and experience with the challenged. As EAA/T is both multidisciplinary and therapeutic, it should ask candidates for personal experiences. Most Paramedical academic programmes have an integral part of the admission policy (Plymouth University /physiotherapy, 2014) that assesses the student's integrity, personality and reliability, all of which are

fundamental for any professional certification. According to Galbraith (2004), understanding adult learners' motivation to learn, whether it is intrinsic and/or extrinsic, is important, otherwise it is more difficult to understand their needs, which could be goal, activity or learning orientated (Galbraith, 2004).

The AMM could be weakened if there is not enough authentic practice. This leads me to believe that the combination of AMM with a qualitative practical experience at a national centre could be the best approach.

2.8 British Model of EAA/T

The British Model (RDA) differs from the American model in strength and structure. It has developed from a long tradition of equestrian sport and a culture of volunteerism where private horse owners, feeling sympathetic towards their local disabled communities, were prepared to lend their own horses to the disabled for the *unforgettable ride* (RDA Official Manual, 1990). Serving thousands of challenged riders, the RDA does not sway from its original belief that horseback riding and driving is a technique that benefits health and wellbeing (Spirit of the RDA, 1995). This Model has been the 'de rigueur' method for the past 40 years, and for that reason alone presents special challenges. Choosing one method for so long may be positive or could potentially weaken a curriculum by being constantly out of touch with today's challenges and stakeholder requirements. Culturally, RDA's volunteer governing body and programme managers have been immersed in the process aimed at establishing methods of EAA/T practitioner training and, as Gannod, Gannod and Henderson (2005) would argue, making adjustments and changes to traditional ideas is difficult. This model does have a national approach to ethical standards, but is individualistic when it comes to training approaches.

2.8.1 British Model: RDA Training Approach

The RDA training model for EAA/T is the largest in the UK. The graduates apply this model to thousands of challenged riders each year (25,000 riders) (RDA, UK). The model provides a basic training certificate (Group Instructor), and an option to study further to receive a coaching certificate at three possible levels for a UK coaching qualification and with the option of two further levels, for an advanced RDA coaching certification.

1. A basic training that accredits an RDA Group Instructor Certificate is conducted onsite at an RDA centre (Group Instructor Qualifications, 2014).
2. The Basic RDA Group instructor can receive the three levels of UK coaching qualifications through the RDA connection to the British Equestrian Federation that, as a sporting body, is included in the National UK Coaching scheme. UK coaching certification is carried out on-site or in a local College (UK Coaching Certificate Qualifications, 2014).

The Basic Training Group Instructor Model, based on private donations of horses and ponies for riding lessons for disabled children and adults, has become the RDA instructor-training model. This model is concerned with group management and organisational skills, safety, and the appropriate selection, hiring and acquiring of equines, while paying little attention to pathologies, goals and lesson plans (RDA Official Manual, 1990). The desire to keep riding skills as the main goal and volunteering as the main method of staffing and maintaining the centres, prevented the development of this model into a EAA/T therapeutic teaching model sought after by the public and most stakeholders (Appendices 18.i and 21.ii). I would argue that the **basic group instructor curriculum** is stuck in a traditional fixed process that fails to allow instructors to unlock their personal potential or address diversity. Even though RDA has taken a huge leap forward by introducing United Kingdom Coaching Qualifications (UKCC) which are for all sporting activities, it still does not stand up to its rhetoric, which, according to the RDA website, group instructor qualifications/ level one and two coaching, do not requiring a graduate instructor/coach to have riding instructor certification (Group Instructor Qualifications, 2014). This level of complaisance creates knowledge gaps in areas of expertise, content knowledge and equine skills. Similar to the USA organisation model, this lack of flexibility in areas of expertise is allowing small organisation like Epona and Eagala, to develop and shift the focus further away from riding skills towards the specialist practitioner, thus causing some fractionalisation within the UK EAA/T community.

In recent years, the Basic Training Group Instructor Model has been adopted by the British Equestrian Federation (BEF) and incorporated in the United Kingdom Coaching Certificate (UKCC) for EAA/T however, training flaws remain (UK Coaching Certificate Qualifications, 2014)

a. The RDA basic group instructor-training curriculum remains unchanged, **de rigueur**, and remains deficient in knowledge of pedagogies, pathologies, therapeutic skills, goal setting and lesson planning.
b. The RDA method of profiling does not ensure that its significant volunteer work force, which is highly motivated and caring, can be trained in the necessary skills of EAA/T professionals.
c. The RDA so far does not align itself with the UKCC coaching philosophy relative to providing further instructor training in salutary skills.
d. The current RDA basic group instructor model, with its traditional perspective, remains non-reflective, making it difficult for prospective EAA/T practitioners (PEPs) to engage in problem solving and problem posing. Without this kind of reflective practice, the PEPs may not be able to build the meaningful perspectives necessary to understand experience and practice. Mezirow (1991) argues, "*We have to understand (*our experiences*) in order to act effectively"* (Mezirow, 1991, p. 10).

BEF and UKCC are promoting a higher level of quality assurance and raise the bar for practical application (BEF Facility Strategies, 2013-2017). However, the absence of a holistic educational method in the RDA instructor-training curriculum prevents a cohesive, ethical, inclusive value-system to a practitioner's career structure. As long as the British Model still clings to a belief that admission to the training programme should be accessible to all, and working, as an EAA/T professional generally remains voluntary, the power of the curriculum design and content is greatly reduced and professionalism, validity and opportunities are compromised. Without opportunities for a professional career structure, the British Model may not be able to create a workforce to adequately support contemporary stakeholder requirements and imperatives. Without a transformative ethos in place, stakeholders' expectations cannot be met. Most stakeholders require instructors and coaches (EAA/T practitioners) as service-staffs to be **professionally** trained rather than **in the process of being trained** through **lifelong learning** (BEF–UKCC-British Equestrian Qualifications, 2014).

Currently RDA leaves therapy to the Medical and Para medical professionals who are connected to the horse world and wish to support the challenged by using equine assisted activities as an alternative interaction technique. This situation could leave a knowledge gap between practitioners and academia, and does not promote expertise or the desire to

engage in research and development (RDA, UK, 2014). After sixty plus years of RDA working daily in the field of EAA/T in the UK the **few** academic studies carried out still come from academics and not practitioners (Brown, 2010). Would (1998), is a physiotherapist, hippo-therapist and horse enthusiast in the UK, used her previous knowledge and equestrian skills to determine whether the wellness of two children with Cerebral Palsy improved after hippo-therapy due to the horse's gait. Burgon (2002), a PhD student in the Social Sciences at Cardiff University studied a group of adults from Devon, UK who were intellectually impaired. She researched the benefits of EAA/T, hippo therapy and psychotherapy. As an EAA/T practitioner and a doctoral candidate in the social sciences, she had the knowledge to produce changes in her clients and help them transfer skills such as self-confidence, which lead to social competence in other environments. Brown (2010), who came from a background of psychiatric nursing also had sufficient medical knowledge to write her thesis about the guided human interactions with horses. In contrast, the non-professional EAA/T volunteer working in the UK has produced no such studies.

The RDA UK model continues to provide fun and sport to its clients, if it could broaden its focus and offer EAA/T practitioners the competence in the skills necessary to engage in therapy and evidence-based practice it would be able to offer even more. It would also not have to rely on medical specialists who limit their focus to specific areas of research within the entire system of EAA/T.

2.9 German Model

The noticeable difference between the RDA and German models is that all EAA/T practitioners in Germany have a prior specialisation in healthcare and/or education and a riding instructor qualification. The only similarity is that they both chose to be affiliated to large, successful Equestrian Federations.

The German model evolved in Germany in the sixties as another technique for physiotherapists who were looking for different treatments for patients with various movement dysfunctions. During the sixties hippotherapy (See Definitions: Hippotherapy) became the property of physiotherapists, and by 1968 the University Orthopaedic Hospital in Halle allowed physiotherapists to use hippotherapy as a treatment modality

for diseases of the musculoskeletal system (Riede, 1988). In 1971, the GDR department of health accepted hippotherapy and reimbursed physiotherapists for treating children and adults (Riede, 1988). It also mandated that physiotherapists engaging in hippotherapy must have a riding instructor certificate and special training in hippotherapy. This requirement remains and practitioners, unless licensed riding instructors with the additional hippotherapy training, will not receive payment when providing hippotherapy (Riede, 1988).

In 1968 the Kuratorium, a private institution formed by a group of experts in medicine, pedagogies and horsemanship, assumed the task of compiling rules and regulations for the training and practice of specialists in hippotherapy in the German Republic. Bringing these experts together resulted in the notion that expertise in horsemanship and hippotherapy was not enough, as human challenges required more that physical therapy. To address the multitude of human challenges and possible equine activities, the therapy was categorised by areas of expertise. In Medicine, it was known as riding-therapy/hippo-therapy. In Psychology and Education, it was called therapeutic education riding/vaulting and for horsemanship it was riding for the disabled rehabilitation sport. Globally each category was part of the domain of EAA/T.

In the German tradition, the Kuratorium continued to insist upon expertise in horseback riding, horse knowledge and care. To maintain a professional license, a specialist must keep their horseback riding and horsemastership license by attending a set amount of training clinics. Currently, experts providing EAA/T as a treatment modality require an elementary level riding certificate for riding and vaulting, an advanced riding certificate for riding for the disabled, and a hippotherapy certificate for Hippotherapy. The German model remains committed to the original idea that EAA/T practitioners must have knowledge of medicine, psycho-education and horsemanship, which makes it possible to provide excellent treatments, and gives practitioners skills for research and development (Heipertz, 1987; Figure 2.3 p. 37). Still, even this exceptional method has its drawbacks. It fails to succeed in encouraging experts to collaborate as each

> *separate professional grouping is protective of their own boundaries, to assess, manage and implement care and rehabilitation* (Smith, Roberts and Balmer, 2000, p. 397),

which leaves little opportunity to discuss ideas. Moreover, such experts tend to become territorial as they receive payment from the Government or private clinics for their services. Lack of collaboration may well interfere with the therapeutic process and prevent EAA/T from meeting client needs.

Figure 2.3 below illustrates the various realms of therapeutic riding (Heipertz, 1981). In this diagram the German model has three overlapping distinct areas, medicine, horsemanship and education converge on the focal point, the horse.

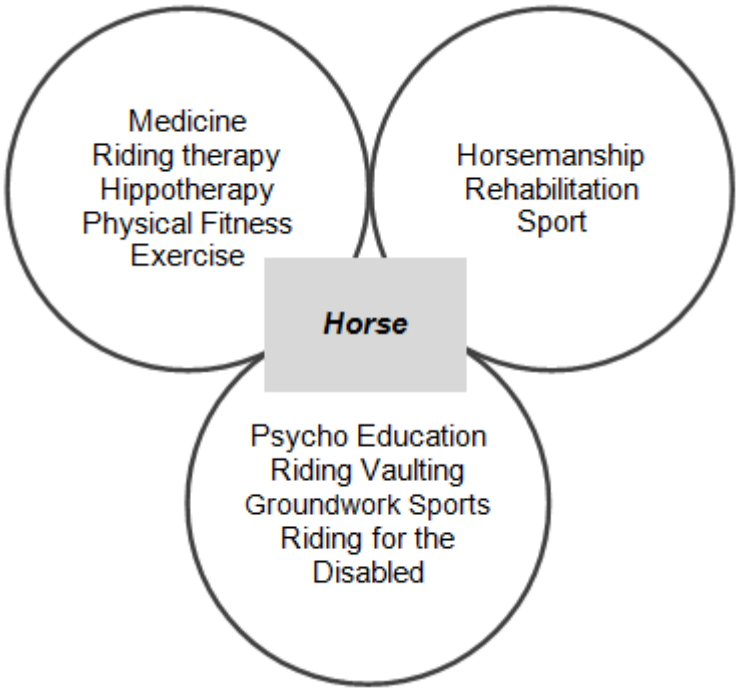

Figure 2.3: Various Realms of TR

2.10 Summary of the Three Models

Each model had developed curricula with specific strengths and weaknesses. Some of the weaknesses identified have the potential to damage the model's purpose of producing trained practitioners with the ability to satisfy client needs. The German model, asking for a specialisation before EAA/T practice, could reduce the holistic approach affecting possible treatment methods and outcomes. Trained physiotherapists and occupational therapists have been shown to believe that **there is no need to overlap any of their work with that of other specialists, allowing poor collaboration habits** to prevail and opening a gap in the service. The German model is an expensive method of providing

EAA/T expertise, where only a few challenged can be treated when there are thousands in need.

The British model chose a **hierarchal coaching method in a transformative ethos of lifelong learning,** hoping it could enhance basic group instructor training without demanding equestrianism. This method failed to meet stakeholder EAA/T expectations of professionalism. The AAM is a highly committed higher education model that competes with the National Organisation (PATH Intl.) training programme where **95% of all practitioners choose the lowest registration level to qualify for practice** (Renker, et al., 2012). All three curricula models would have to extend their boundaries to gain stakeholder consensus by raising the level of training and/or service. If a global EAA/T governing body could become responsible for set ethical training standards, many of these issues would be resolved.

In the next section, current Israeli practice and core needs of the EAA/T training programme are examined.

2.11 Current EAA/T Practice in Israel and Core Needs for Israel's EAA/T Curricula

A curriculum that focuses on core needs and values can provide students with opportunities for initiatives and amenities to study. Core needs and values are the cornerstone of any successful curriculum (Shaw and Degazon, 2008). Most educators must be aware that they are the catalyst to sustained success (Waite, 2010). Any curriculum needs a systematic and organised approach so that it 'runs like clockwork'. Core needs and values cannot be marginalised, and if they are, curriculum pressures will arise that will affect achievement and eventual successful practice (Waite, 2010).

Globally EAA/T colleges providing training are generally managed as charitable organisations. These organisations grow in membership by adopting the social and moral consciousness needed of their members. Thomas (2012) would argue that they are,

> *there to serve the interests of its beneficiaries, clients or service users as well as it can* (Thomas, 2012, p. 15).

To stay viable EAA/T organisations are often more concerned with large memberships rather than quality of performance (Renker et al., 2012). Any shift towards academic institutions assuming responsibility for EAA/T training could improve the level of professionalism, the possibilities for research and development, and the opportunity to create a more organised body of knowledge (Mullen, 2010), pursuing high ideals. According to Gerrish (2001), this is the only way that rhetoric and reality will be able to guarantee successful practitioner and client relationships.

The foundations for an Israeli EAA/T diploma curriculum and work practice were built from personal and communal value systems representing the Israeli community of EAA/T practitioners. In recent years, these systems have enforced codes of practice in the field, which reflect recommended legal codes, rules and guidelines by the Israel Equestrian Federation (IEF), a national charitable organisation. Recently, core values were presented as written statements intended to influence EAA/T practitioners and emphasise the responsibly they must serve the fundamental needs of their communities. In addition, Israeli college websites advertise EAA/T curricula, juxtaposed with codes of conduct, rules and regulations regarding student responsibilities, and rules and ethical codes for course participation. Writing standards for training and course values side by side is aimed at reflecting the faculty's approach towards the EAA/T curriculum. McDowell (2010) suggests that it is important to present core values as a written statement, as they **create a common understanding using a common vocabulary**. Once written, they act as a reference for developing clarity about actions, behaviours and standards that are central to creating a safe, caring, and effective learning environment (McDowell, 2010). However, not everyone has the same views about these written codes. Elkins (2009), who argues that people will focus on the written code, can easily forget about the reason they were written.

Researching the literature reveals an important question: **How can the curriculum ensure that students' emotional, intellectual and spiritual development is not forgotten?** (Astin, Astin and Lindholm, in Dalton and Crosby, 2011; Ferguson and Millman, 2008). Until it is possible for EAA/T practitioners to fully invest in their profession, like lawyers, doctors, and teachers do, they may not have the opportunity to synchronise personal integrity, morals and private values with their work (McDowell, 2010).

So far, the literature has revealed possible gaps in the curriculum when authoritative bodies are bound by membership and can only insist on the adoption of recommendations and codes of practice relating to membership needs. This creates: a) Lack of alignment between brand (EAA/T) and core values (Thorbjørnsen and Supphellen (2011); b) Clients' needs are not put before that of the organisation and its output, and c) Lack of written practice codes (goals or working protocols and evaluations) disconnect the workforce from feasible practice codes in the workplace - the EAA/T operating centres.

The lack of practice codes in the workplace is compelling Israeli society to impact upon the curriculum and not vice versa. The lack of alignment between qualifications and codes of practice has encouraged insurance companies to take the lead by only covering centres with trained personnel, and only sending clients to those centres. Accordingly, parents will only send their children to centres recommended and paid for by medical insurance companies, for example, Clalit, the most established medical insurance in Israel (Clalit, 2014).

Further, the EAA/T practitioner's education is becoming increasingly commoditised within the academies that offer EAA/T training. These academies show greater concern for monetary gain as Colleges compete locally in the marketplace. In the pursuit for wealth, there is a danger that those responsible for developing programmes are paying too little attention to quality and may well produce students who are likely to fail as practitioners. Gaps occur when Israeli academies fail to adhere to high standards in both knowledge and core values for the sake of monetary gains over successful outcomes. Morley (2010) argues that the established academy is increasingly being viewed as a sub system of the economy.

Currently in Israel, national professional standards and criteria for EAA/T course development are being discussed. Still, as yet there is no academic control or public governance to protect the future of Israeli EAA/T curricula. The current Israeli College entrepreneurial approach contains minimum controls regarding standards and performance, which has led to a prolific growth of EAA/T courses. Public governance could ensure better codes of conduct and rules outlining what should be considered proper practice. Defining ethical values and standards (mission statement, protocols), within the profession would verify conformity and high integrity within professional practice. EAA/T should commission someone like Butts who wrote The Ethics of Nursing (Butts,

2001) to give nurses, regardless of their own ethical and moral background, a sense of direction for professional practice (Ethics of Nursing, 2001). The Ethics of Nursing supports all British nursing schools, regardless of training methods.

2.12 Summary of EAA/T Models

To summarise, any future curriculum must connect successfully with Prospective EAA/T Practitioners (PEP), and receive stakeholder approval, then it might be considered to have a strong values base (Kwaku-Senah, 2006). Only with a strong base can the curriculum guide personal decisions and inspire greater personal achievements. EAA/T students should be given opportunities to study in Israeli academic institutions mindful of raising the 'bar', and with a focus on integrity and accountability rather than on operational smoothness and 'commodity' sales. Israeli programmes should recruit students who are able to take effective and appropriate action; who can explain what they are seeking to achieve; and who continue to learn from their experience individually and collectively (Knight and Yorke, 2002). Schuck, Gordon and Buchanan (2008) argue that values enhance higher education practice, as well as reflection on practice, consideration of ethical issues and risk-taking (Schuck et al., 2008). From the vast amount of literature that discusses the value of codes it is apparent that this area needs further discussion. To raise the bar, validate and professionalise the curriculum, **codes of conduct should have an equal footing alongside academic learning.** Failing to invest in fundamental core values will render the educational experience less meaningful, reputable and viable. Core values are a hidden asset acting as a guide for decision-making, and ensuring fairness and flexibility in the pursuit of professional excellence. The nursing profession has a governing body outside of individual training schools that takes charge of national nursing ethics and core values providing standards for practice. If EAA/T becomes a profession in its own right, it will need national and international governing bodies similar to those of occupational therapy and nursing that ensure core values and competences (World Federation of Occupational Therapists, 2011).

The next section takes a critical look at established educational theories concerned with adult learning. EAA/T students are adult learners who come to study for various reasons.

2.13 Embracing Pedagogic Paradigms and Educational Theories

Coming into EAA/T from a background of nursing, I was able to experience a profession that is willing, as Gerrish (2001) suggested, to … "*push forward the frontiers of nursing knowledge"* (Gerrish, 2001, p. 110). The nursing profession provides an excellent example of a professional governing body that continually strives for best practice to meet stakeholder needs by reviewing practice and implementing an evidence-based curriculum. This approach encourages and upgrades educator expertise, empowering the use of pedagogic paradigms.

Two nursing experts, McHugh and Lake (2011), researched **clinical nursing expertise and its centrality to quality patient care.** Seeking the best student nurse practical experience, they concluded that environments with higher means of education and experience and more professional practice would have a positive contextual effect upon the individual nurse and her expertise. If, in the context of a hospital environment, a nurse would practice poor nursing techniques that were allowed to flourish, this could negatively influence clinical nursing expertise leaving a significant gap in nurse education and experience. In the light of their experience, if a future curriculum wishes to facilitate the PEPs full potential then it too must provide EAA/T educators with sufficient knowledge so that PEPs can experience excellent practice techniques, and enjoy an opportunity to practice in a positive working environment. This would make it possible for EAA/T graduates to enter the arena with confidence and expertise, to take charge and facilitate best arena practice and meet the clients' needs. According to Bjorklund and Eloranta (2008) if it became the norm for educators to maintain a high level of practical experience, teaching and thinking reflectively, this would encourage problem solving and build student observation and meta-skills.

In Israel, most EAA/T curricula is difficult to deliver because of a shortage in expert teaching staff. The teaching staff must be concerned with effective adult learner/student–centred strategies to help students reach their full potential to operate in the arena with autonomy. This shortage in qualified staff might be related to the colleges' main concerns, which are maximising the number of graduating students. In order to realise these goal colleges are often required to lower admission standards and achievement requirements, resulting in fewer genuinely qualified practitioners (Clark, 2009). It will be no small feat

to convince faculty members to be more aware of PEPs needs and to make the curriculum more stimulating and empowering. It is widely assumed in Israel that higher education faculty members would have the expertise to teach EAA/T students to become experts even if they have no understanding of practice. As Clark (2009) argues, there is no correlation between a faculty educator expertise's and the potential capability of his or her novice student. To ensure correlation and maximum student benefits, these gaps in the learning process must be filled. Informed recommendations about best practice must go to the EAA/T administrative community.

To more fully understand the needs of prospective EAA/T practitioners (PEPs) it is necessary to investigate some well-known adult learning theories.

2.13.1 Transformative Learning Theory

Mezirow (1991), a professor of adult and continued education, first described an adult learning theory called the Transformational Theory (TL). The theory explains how and why adults change their interpretation of their worlds to guide future action. Mezirow's (1991) concern was that many:

> *psychological theories described were missing the dimension of* ***meaning*** *the way in which adults make meaning of their experience* (Mezirow, 1991, p. xii).

Mezirow (1991) considered that it is important for adults to learn to think for themselves through true emancipation from sometimes mindless or unquestioning acceptance of what they have come to know through life experience, especially through cultural institutions. Mezirow (1991) argued that adults making meaning of their lives, engaging in **deep learning**, were not content with simplistic rote learning. He considered adult learning to occur on multiple levels to assist adults who need to progress from knowing what they know without questioning to identify, assess and evaluate new information, and in some cases, reframe their world-view through the incorporation of newly created knowledge or acquired information (Mezirow, in Rampton-Halverson, 2011). These acts of reframing existing knowledge and creating new knowledge are transformative in nature.

Mezirow (1991) maintains that TL is a key for guiding any new adult learning curriculum. Any EAA/T training programme should encourage self-directive reflection upon life experiences as it helps students cope with commitment and ongoing personal growth and development. TL may be a way in which the curriculum motivates students to *"impact the professional, social, political aspects of learners"* (Galbraith, 2004, p. 23). A successful curriculum is only possible when the planners of the curriculum understand the motives or **educational mission** of students enrolling (Meirzrow, in Taylor, 2008). It requires educator expertise and the awareness of students' reasons for participating which, in the case of EAA/T, could be several ranging from the desire to help others to improve their desire to their human/horse relationship skills, cognitive abilities, or just to earn money through working full or part-time in the field. Understanding the students' educative mission is central to understanding their responses to EAA/T in the context of the course. Taylor (2008) would suggest that students as subjects rather than objects are constantly reflecting and acting upon the transformation of their world. Mezirow (1991) is convinced that TL provides an unconscious acquisition of knowledge that generates a sense of empowerment (Mezirow, 1991). Adult learners, under the guidance of excellent educators could become critical and reflective thinkers (Silberman, 1996), qualities needed by EAA/T professional practitioners.

There are alternative views that contest Mezirow's psycho-critical view. There has been a notable view shift from transformation in relationships pursuant to a particular life event, towards greater interest in factors that shape the transformative experience (critical reflection, holistic approaches and relationships). One neurobiological view argues that a physically based pathway to transformative learning brings into question traditional learning models centred on behaviourism, cognitivism and constructivism. After conducting Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI), clinicians discovered that the brain structure changes during the learning process. Neurobiological transformation takes place invoking the parasympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system and the pitocin secreting endocrine system to alter learning during periods of search and discovery (Janik, in Taylor 2008). This clinical understanding of the learning process fits well with the idea that adult learning can be both motivated by intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic motivation refers to feelings and sensations existing inside the individual that makes learning pleasurable. Extrinsic motivation relies upon an activity or some catalyst in one's external environment to produce a positive outcome. It is important for educators to

recognise the deciding factors for adult learning (Galbraith, 2004; Spear and Mocker, 1981). It could be a response to external circumstances or some social condition. McCauley's (2013) premise is that there are often cultural reasons behind the social responses, which may be the

> *increased capacity for respect, having impact on the other or being open to change by the other* (McCauley, 2013, p. 1).

The challenge for EAA/T educators is to understand how adults learn so that they can arouse and maintain interest in the students, regardless of their global or specific learning motives. They must have the opportunity to reflect on the complexity of human relationships, to use their own personality and trigger motivation in the class (Schmidt, Rotgans and Yew, 2011).

Imparting a philosophical stance into a future curriculum could be transformative. Students from various cultural backgrounds and experiences could have the opportunity to recognise and re-frame their culturally induced dependency roles and relationships to focus on context and new insights and to interpret an EAA/T experience. According to Chavasse, (2001) TL prospers a student's intuitive and interpretive experiential learning experience. A holistic curriculum adds more meaning to learning, practice and students' daily lives. It opens experiences and beliefs to scrutiny by identifying the role of feelings and relationships while providing an emotive, sensory, and kinaesthetic experience through personal reflection and group discussion.

2.13.2 Problem-Based Learning (PBL) Theory

As an EAA/T educator and one that uses discovery learning, I suggest that PEPs who spend half of their coursework engaging in real situations with challenged learners should have the opportunity to engage in discovery learning, as it develops critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills. Problem-based Learning (PBL) is a method of discovery learning and according to Taylor (2008), is an experiential learning technique that encourages critical reflection in learning situations. Maza (2013) suggested that it is an instructional hands-on method of activity that enables students to identify, define and solve many of the problems that may arise in practice. PBL supports any future EAA/T practitioner, who while working, must often make split-second decisions, improvise, or

modify his teaching technique. This argument was supported by Bjorklund and Eloranta (2008) who maintained that PBL helps students identify the problem, operationalise it and come up with alternative options and actions leading to solutions as well as determining the desired results and evaluate the results.

PBL was first developed for the education of physicians in 1965 by the faculty at McMaster University, USA, and is based upon the principles of student-centred adult learning theory that requires prior experience to be effective; makes use of problem solving and hypothesis testing; entails the application of knowledge into practice; and necessitates the identification of learning needs (Distler, 2006). The technique of PBL is generally carried out in small groups, who are introduced to the problem, and then asked by the facilitator to explain the problem and describe how it may affect other environments. Each student assigns him or herself to a task to gather information about and solve the problem by accessing resources from a well-organised therapeutic riding centre. As the information gathering is self-directed, there are no assigned texts or directives from the facilitator. The students then regroup and collectively discuss the findings, with the objective of reaching a feasible solution (Norman and Schmidt, 1992; Savery and Duffy, 2001). PBL differs from the traditional educational approach to which most students are accustomed because it does not provide all the facts, and then tests students' ability to recall these facts by way of memorisation (Torp and Sage, 2002).

There is considerable debate about the pros and cons of PBL. Jones and Turner (2006) argued for PBL, saying that it reached the goal of **coaching holistically**. After a twelve-week programme of PBL to a final class of eleven undergraduate students Jones and Turner (2006) suggested that students shifted from a position of shock to transformative learning and reflective thinking to become more aware of problems they would face while coaching (Jones and Turner, 2006, p. 181). Kirschner, Sweller and Clark (2006) argue that PBL as minimally guided instruction is **incompatible with our knowledge of human cognitive architecture** and that and the role of long-term memory (Kirschner et al., 2006). Clark (2009) argued that PBL - minimally guided instruction is ineffective and does not work for most students leaving them struggling. He suggests that it is only suitable for the

> *most advanced or senior student or subject matter experts* (Clark, 2009, p. 6).

He maintains that to maximise the depth and breadth of learning that is required today by stakeholders and educators, Colleges should not seek minimally guided instruction for students but provide strongly guided teaching with demonstration and hands-on practice, and immediate feedback on mistakes (Clark, 2009).

Today's Israeli EAA/T practitioner might have a greater role in collaborative medicine, as medical insurances are paying for EAA/T as a therapeutic treatment model for their clients. However, this role could evade them if the curriculum does not provide new opportunities to advance therapeutic and educational skills. Incorporating PBL into the curriculum could provide more feedback on clinical preparedness than current methods of knowledge measurements, such as exams. It could prevent students' emotional exhaustion and frustration due to lack of involvement (Taylor, 2008). All the same, there are always drawbacks. Educators may become more concerned with **why** they teach rather than **how** they teach (Taylor, 2008). PBL does require educator willingness to change in order to facilitate transformative student learning.

Ultimately any form of transformative student learning requires educators to understand how knowledge is constructed, and how the memory and learning processes work (Taylor, in Taylor, 2008). To incorporate PBL into a future curriculum would require some fundamental changes (Chavasse, 2001). Torp and Sage (2002) suggested that a total metamorphosis of teacher and student roles in the classroom would be necessary (Torp and Sage, 2002). Educators' belief systems would have to shift from traditional, content-based (syllabi) teaching methods to a methodology that requires the achievement of learning outcomes (Ertmer and Simons, 2006). This shift could reduce the gap between many educators' concept of theory and practice, which maybe grounded in a positivistic philosophy, and has problems with constructivism and holism, reflection and emancipation (Chavasse, 2001).

2.13.3 Active Learning Theory (AL)

During practice, any EAA/T practitioner must be a creative problem solver, and always mentally involved and active on task. Active learning (AL) is a method that encourages students to observe, listen, ask questions, discuss and practise with others, then to continue asking questions based on educator responses. AL brings together a

comprehensive collection of instructional strategies, including teamwork and thinking about content in that moment of time (Tong, 2001). Bruner (1973), an American psychologist, who made a significant contribution to the appreciation of cognitive psychology and cognitive learning theories in educational psychology, maintained that students who actively engage with material are more likely to recall information. He asserted that expository instruction is less effective than the hypothetical mode, which encourages students to become creative problem solvers. He argued that observational methods of learning are better for students, as they help make the transfer of skills to new situations easier.

McMorrow (2006), a tutor and active health manager in Galway, Ireland, explored the experiences and perspectives of students and educators using AL. She and others (Kumar and Kogut, 2006; De Rossi, Aksal, Gazi and Isam, 2011; Crowther, 1997) argued that a constructivist epistemology like AL enables activation of students' prior knowledge gained through learning experiences, thus providing them with flexible cognitive scaffolds to innovate and integrate new information within existing knowledge structures. However, McMorrow (2006) identified a host of constraints, the chief among these being teachers' values and attitudes, which were the main influence in deciding whether to incorporate AL methods. Teachers felt they had not been provided with structural educational support to carry out an AL class. They reported that classroom atmospheres were noisy and not conducive to AL, and preferred sticking to the traditional Irish curriculum that emphasised the transmission of content and textbooks (McMorrow, 2006). AL could be workable for PEP as it provides an opportunity to catalyse the connection between content and outcomes. If EAA/T educators' philosophic point of view allows full engagement and students are given prior knowledge that runs deeper than **name, age and diagnosis** (Chavasse, 2001), the method will work.

Active Learning (AL) has underlying principles of reciprocity, reflexivity, and reflection (Robertson, in De Rossi et al., 2011). It shifts responsibility of learning to students while creating context around given material. However, AL differs from PBL, (discovery learning), and can fail when the student has no prior knowledge of the subject matter and therefore rely upon the educator to provide this knowledge. Bonwell and Eison (1991), two expert educationalists, maintain that AL could be modified and used in higher education if educators gave the students time to team up and write responses to questions,

discuss common strategies and, when possible, provide opportunities for students to apply new information in different settings appropriate for the topic.

Bonwell and Eison (1991) description of AL fits well with EAA/T education and training. They suggested:

> *strategies promoting active learning be defined as instructional activities involving students in doing things and thinking about what they are doing* (Bonwell and Eison, 1991, p. 5).

Silberman (1996) like Bonwell and Eison (1991) before him was convinced that AL is an excellent way to promote thinking skills.

2.13.4 Work-Based Learning (WBL) Theory

WBL (Work-based Learning) is a very practical and active learning method, as it enhances practical learning for both EAA/T students and qualified practitioners. WBL differs from PBL and AL as it relies on independent and collaborative learning in the workplace. With the support of workplace mentors, a practitioner can engage in the self-management of his learning (Johnson, in De Rossi et al., 2011). Work-based projects conducted in the work setting can create a highly skilled and flexible workforce, along with economic stability and up-to-date skills and knowledge. WBL can bridge the gap between higher education and the workplace. It improves practice and provides a roadmap for the personal and professional reflection of workers (Keeling et al., in De Rossi et al., 2011).

One way to successfully curricularise an EAA/T curriculum is to promote life-long learning and the continuation of professional development through a WBL method known as in-service training (IST). In theory, IST is designed to further develop practitioners' skills after he or she begins work. It is generally implemented informally either at the workplace or via professional development courses. IST maintains a constant flow of current ideas and concepts coming from academia, research and development as well as employers and practitioners (Ramatlapana, 2009). However, if the training schemes are not qualitative, effective and relevant to the EAA/T practice, they become a waste of valuable staff time and often of limited resources (Rycus, and Hughes, 2000). To incorporate IST into the curriculum and guarantee that it will achieve results in the

workplace, mentors and facilitators will also need job training. IST could ensure that all EAA/T practitioners receive regular work discussions centred on practice problems. It might enhance a practitioner's teaching ability, as well as identify learning outcomes in the practical environment that can be agreed upon and by the practitioner, employer and the institution.

To conclude, significant gaps exists in curricula if educators are not given opportunities to become aware of the transformative learning methods for adults and then know how to use them. If the curriculum can provide Mezirow's (1978) TL non-confrontational approach to understanding the needs of adult learners, and apply Taylor's (2008) neurobiological theory that once learning begins the brain is stimulated and modulation occurs, then PEPs could graduate as thoughtful professionals with exceptional knowledge and skills.

A curriculum should be designed to provide educators with the opportunity to practice pedagogic paradigms such as PBL and AL which support learning outcomes and practice (field experiences). The curriculum and the training programme must provide educator and facilitator training for teaching staff so that they can be trained in the application of pedagogic paradigms that improve educator confidence and teaching techniques. A well-conceived curriculum would maintain mutual exchange links to Academia and to the field (Nixon, Smith, Stafford and Camm, 2006).

If IST in the workplace is included as a tool to maintain knowledge and keep in-touch with current practice and research, it could assure a constant connection between theoretical knowledge and practice and meet stakeholders' needs.

2.14 Curriculum Theory

It was necessary to research several curriculum theories to uncover any elements that could be the source of curriculum gaps, as well as determining what might be the best theoretical approach for the Israeli curriculum. So far there has not been an investigation of this magnitude completed in Israel, or in fact globally, and the most definitive theoretical approach to EAA/T training has yet to be found. Israeli Colleges are using a singular approach to curriculum that is based on the original traditional model that came from the UK, where the curriculum is transmitted as a syllabus, and is only concerned

with content and the importance of topics (Smith, 2000). There has been little thought during the past decade from course providers that the curriculum could take a more constructive, emancipatory approach by constructing critical knowledge (Chavasse, 2001) removing gaps that reduce its authority.

The Israeli curriculum could be described as prescriptive (Shkedi, 2009), as it lacks a conscious awareness of the subconscious or unconscious workings of the student's psyche and how these dynamics might affect curriculum and instruction. Students' emotional and intellectual development are so intertwined that success depends upon the success of both. It lacks the element of the good story, which always has a special structure with a beginning, middle, and end (Shkedi, 2009). The curriculum, like the story, is a product and expression of the narrative language. An EAA/T curriculum must follow a narrative that pays careful attention to collective understanding and practices and to structural questions, as well as exploring educators' values and their practice. It could provide students with the opportunity to reflect upon their actions and ideas concerning particular interventions and to articulate what theories were involved. According to Mayes, (2009) a curriculum constructed in this manner, might lead to curiosity and creativity, which could lead to motivation and, eventually a better client service.

According to Smith (2000) in his article Curriculum Theory and Practice, the origin of the word curriculum comes from the running chariot tracks of Greece. In Greek, the word 'curriculum' literally means 'a course', whereas in Latin the meaning is 'racing chariot', **currere**, which is the definition of 'to run'.

2.14.1 Model #1: The Transmitted Curriculum Model

The **Transmitted Curriculum Model (TCM)** describes the curriculum as a body of knowledge transmitted via a syllabus, a list or summary of topics, which are already planned. A syllabus usually contains specific information about the course, i.e. topics covered, course information, contacts and scheduling. It does not generally indicate topic importance and can be described as a traditional textbook approach, where the syllabus follows an order of contents or a pattern prescribed by a logical approach to a subject (Smith, 2000) where everything is laid out for ease of use and there are definite levels of accomplishment. *TCM* is a body of knowledge only concerned with content, and

education becomes the process by which it is transmitted. This model limits the content that one wishes to transmit, but suits students who enjoy rote learning, with pre-prepared course material given to them on discs. Students in Israel are highly accustomed to this traditional education system that functions by transmitting information from generation to generation through a hierarchy from university professors down to the students (Dewey, 1933). Dewey an eminent educational philosopher, whose ideas had an influential impact on education, argued that textbooks were the chief representatives of lore, traditions and wisdom of the past, while teachers were simply the conduits of the material to the pupils. This implies that one was not allowed to cultivate one's own thinking skills, but had to receive all new subject matter from the mature wise adult who received it via 'textbooks' (Shkedi, 2009). TCM may require much support from the educator and may be suitable for novice EAA/T students who lack knowledge and confidence. However, later more is required of the curriculum as students are often looking for a method of learning that encourages the use of critical thinking skills and elicits reflection upon action while building their own professional artistry (Toohey, 2011). Dewey (1933) as an education reformer saw some role for rote learning, but emphasised the importance of active and reflective learning if meaning was to be made in the learning process.

2.14.2 Model #2: The Curriculum as Product

The **Product Theory (PT)** approach builds a curriculum to achieve a certain end- product – educated students. This theory according to Smith, (2000) perceives education as a technical exercise in which 'objectives are set, plans drawn up and applied and the outcomes measured'. PT was the thinking behind the National Schools Curriculum in the UK when the only concerns were objectives and content knowledge, and not opinion of content. However, the working group to the '**14-19, Reform'** (Tomlinson, 2004), made the following recommendation: **ensure that programmed content is relevant to the needs of learners aspiring to particular destinations and to the needs of individual academic and employer sectors** (Tomlinson, 2004).

The **PT** curriculum requires that EAA/T students enter the world of EAA/T and discover all the facts about EAA/T. In the process, it gives students a great deal of working detail, to which they must pay attention (Smith, 2000; Bobbitt, 1918). The educator supports the

student by breaking down and analysing tasks required for practice. This model could support the PEPs' abilities, attitudes, habits and appreciation of the knowledge discovered and constructed. However, it does not encourage critical thinking, vision, or self-awareness as it is a technical strategic exercise that is heavily influenced by the development of managed thinking and practice (Smith, in Smith, 2000). Feuerstein (1994) argues that practitioners need critical consciousness or self-awareness of the impact of his or her intervention to be able to transform stimuli experienced in the environment for the benefit of the challenged learner. In the book, Mediated Learning Experience (Feuerstein, Klein, and Tannenbaum, 1994) Feuerstein suggests a framework to develop this awareness, which he named the Mediated Learning Experience. I would argue that critical thinking and self-awareness are necessary tools for multitasking practitioners who are often working with challenged and disabled humans, with strong and active horses and volunteers in a riding arena.

The logic of the product theory is that it is designed to produce graduate EAA/T practitioners. The educators apply the model, which is then judged by the outcome, the quality of the graduating EAA/T practitioners (Smith, in Smith, 2000), the students being asked to demonstrate competencies in all components of the curriculum. This is a very systematic and technical curriculum that does not necessarily encourage the student to have any vision or personal centred learning goals (Smith, 2000; Bobbitt, 1918). As an educator, I would suggest that it has limited use and could be beneficial for technical topics concerned with equestrian safety, horse-care and management, and rules and regulations that require rote and mechanistic learning methods as suggested in the oldest extant work on the art of horsemanship. An EAA/T curriculum must have sufficient scope for the educator and EAA/T student to think more critically, so that they can engage in honest discussions aimed at preparing practitioners who will be required by clients and other stakeholders today to take a more skilled approach to their work.

2.14.3 Model #3: The Curriculum as Process

The **Process Model** envisages a curriculum not just as a physical thing, but rather, a way of translating any educational ideas into a hypothesis of practice that can be tested and evaluated. It invites critical testing rather than acceptance. It encourages educators and

students to work together for meaning making vis a vies authentic work. The curriculum becomes an

> *active process that links with practical forms of reasoning* (Smith, 2000, p. 3).

The educator is a critical thinker in action who understands what is expected of him or her in the role as an educator/facilitator. Guided by this premise, conversations are encouraged between educator and students, provoking reflection and action (Bobbitt, 1918). According to Bobbitt (1918) it is a process that continues throughout the course where the educator is able to continually evaluate and observe the students' learning outcomes, and adapt his or her teaching to students' needs. An attempt to communicate the essential principles and features of this theory opens it to critical scrutiny and leads to a discussion of whether the theory is capable of effective translation into practice.

My personal experience has shown me that it could be difficult to impose this type of learning on EAA/T students who are overwhelmed by all they will need to know regarding how and what to practice during an authentic situation in the arena. However, if EAA/T had the opportunity to synthesise different types of information from past or present experiences, which represent knowledge, behaviours and values stored in the conscious or unconscious mind, and they had the ability to modify this knowledge at any time then the process model, in the context of EAA/T, could provide students with greater opportunities to gather in facts and procedures and provide significant meaning to their future working environment.

2.14.4 Model #4: The Curriculum as Praxis

The **Praxis Model** makes an explicit commitment to emancipation. Thus, action is not simply informed, it is committed. This form of **critical pedagogy** (Smith, 2000; Grundy, 1987) goes further than placing the learning experience with the learner. It sets up a dialogue between students and educators where it considers the experience of both, "*recognising them as both problematic*" (Smith, 2000; Grundy, 1987, p. 103). It allows them to confront their problems and relationships. It could be difficult to engage educators and EAA/T students in a dialogue at the beginning of the course, as the student may not yet have built any kind of a relationship with the educator. The praxis model, like the

process model may be better suited to the later levels of curriculum that require educators to have a personal, yet shared commitment to the EAA/T students, allowing them to think critically and understand their role. The educator must be capable of setting out a principled action plan, which elicits and facilitates conversations between teacher and the EAA/T student that will evolve into informed and committed action. According to Mayes (2009) this process allows for continual evaluation, and the defining of learning outcomes, recognised and solved. This process encourages educators to sufficiently understand their own psychological perspectives so that they are able to reshape goals and be emotionally beneficial, even therapeutic to the students in their care.

2.14.5 Model #5: Andragogical Model

Toohey (2011), an educationalist who has specialised in designing higher education curricula argues that there must be a clear differentiation between adult and child learning techniques, and puts forward an andragogical model for adult learners. She is convinced that an andragogical model provides adult learners with opportunities for acquiring new knowledge and assesses self-learning ability, while presenting evidence of achievement. She joins other education experts, Mezirow (1991) and Galbraith (2004) when she suggests that any curriculum for adult learners must apply techniques encouraging reflective and critical thinking, so that students can connect to the topics they are studying. According to Toohey (2011) andragogy is the art and science of adult learning, it encourages adult learners to perform tasks, solve problems (**cognitive approach**), and live in a more satisfying way (**socially critical approach**). This method of adult learning could link students to EAA/T topics, while emphasising plans and intentions, activities and effects. However, much like Mezirow (1991) and Galbraith (2004), Toohey (2011) points out that andragogy only works if there is full understanding of both teacher and student roles.

2.14.6 Summary of Curriculum Theory

The future direction of EAA/T curricula should not subscribe to one specific model. EAA/T is a multidisciplinary profession encompassing many different topics that require different approaches to learning (Burgess, 2007). A combined **Product** and **Process Model** could make it both content driven, and cognitively and socially critical.

Combining product and process models allows the curriculum's organic development to cope with complex curriculum requirements by the individual needs of stakeholders. For example, in Israel medical insurance companies expect the practitioner to have expertise in therapy, while the IEF expects expertise in horse knowledge and horsemanship. Building a curriculum that connects the product model to the process model moves the curriculum from a more traditional, teacher-centred and technical approach, to a holistic approach (O'Neill, 2010). A traditional rote learning mechanistic approach is more useful for topics, such as safety, horsemastership, and anatomy, which have known outcomes and require students to know what is expected from them. A process model emphasising holism (the entire curriculum and not just a collection of topics and parts) provides opportunities for students to intuitively plan and **integrate** concepts, across, within and to future knowledge (O'Neill, 2010). A process model that is more of a student-centred model and andragogical, allows students to reflect in the moment while engaging with all elements of thought required for implicit reasoning to solve problems and understand the purpose of practice. If an EAA/T curriculum is a combination of the product model and process model and uses a method of teaching and learning that moves along a continuum from teacher- centred to student-centred learning it could become more constructive and emancipatory and more likely meet the needs of EAA/T students.

In the next section the research investigated curriculum design. Curriculum design has to match the desired goals of the course and demonstrate how it can be a means to achieving those goals. By investigating curriculum designs, its strengths and weaknesses, a better understanding of the current EAA/T curriculum and its goals could be reached.

2.15 Curriculum Design

It is a major challenge to reform the current Israeli curriculum design. After researching different curriculum theories and methods of delivery it appears that a more innovating pluralistic design could integrate several learning theories that take into account various student and stakeholder needs (Gerrish, 2001). Today, the goals of an Israeli curriculum include **stakeholder needs**. This requires Israeli EAA/T graduates to have multidisciplinary skills, and be able to demonstrate all the characteristics of a professionally qualified person.

Until now the Israel curriculum has been built from a culture of caring **diversity and universality** (Leininger, 1988), and a sense of apprenticeship and tradition. According to Leininger (1988) when the cultural background is the dominant building block of a curriculum, critical thinking skills will be neglected (Leininger, 1988). Changing the curriculum design from its more traditional approach towards innovation, may answer a key course question:

> *What is most important for these students to know and how might they best learn it?* (Toohey, 2011, p. 25).

It may also support broader educational goals and facilitate thinking logically, analytically and creatively, so that students find the best way to achieve their learning outcomes. These objectives put the focus on what students need as opposed to what the teacher has to offer. Focusing on student needs customises the EAA/T programme, and could assure a higher success rate in the workplace. At present the EAA/T training model emphasises teacher-centred learning, a viewpoint that upholds traditional educational training techniques that are contextual barriers restricting new methods of learning (O'Neill and McMahon, 2005). Some academies even limit topics and techniques applied during the course. For example, recently a college in Israel decided not to teach longeing, as it considered it too difficult for EAA/T students to learn and out of concern that it might reduce the pass rate.

An EAA/T curriculum should provide graduates with opportunities for reflection and assessment. To make this happen would be no easy task as it *"involved two intertwined strands*" (Manogue and Brown, 2007, p. 75), changing of the design, in order to promote higher order thinking, and the task of creating a culture in which collegiality and collaboration flourish. Manogue and Brown, (2007) maintain that meticulous care in the facilitation of curricular changes, resistance can remain high, leading to a retreat back to the previous curriculum with just a few cosmetic changes. Donaldson, (2010) believes that to implement new ideas into a future curriculum will require knowledgeable and motivated educators. Educators need to be inspirational, fun, enthusiastic and committed to their work. Without effective communication with students it will be difficult or even impossible to generate an acceptable curriculum (Donaldson, 2010). Educators should be linked with their work, which is building and providing a curriculum that allows graduates to leave college with knowledge in intellectual enquiry skills, and authentic practical

experience. Without these attributes, there will be gaps in standards and credibility that will prevent in the case of the Israeli EAA/T curriculum, stakeholder consensus and Government validation (Brown, 2000). Israeli EAA/T curricula offer a diploma but have no clearly defined pathway for further training or career opportunities in EAA/T. This situation has a negative impact upon EAA/T, as it is unable to provide sufficient professional development for practitioners who would like to make a career in EAA/T with the possibility to assume leadership roles.

Having only one level of training makes it more difficult within the field to produce educators with mentoring qualifications, who can draw from their extensive experience and lead students toward professionalism. It has been suggested by the Therapeutic Riding Professional Committee that in the future, along with the induction of the new national diploma, there will be mentor courses and possible advanced coaching courses and qualifications. However, this new approach does little to encourage student learning or amend the weak method of student admission policy or promote future professionalism.

Building and designing a professional curriculum could create future opportunities for EAA/T practitioners that could move EAA/T training towards advanced learning. A new curricular design would produce knowledgeable and transformed EAA/T practitioners who could become new leaders in the EAA/T community (Wieck et al., 2002). As standard-bearers within the profession, their related careers, interests, education, knowledge, training, core values and ethics would encourage professional changes in legal, medical and educational standards. The new and enhanced curriculum (programme and courses) could be conceived with academic links and several hierarchical levels of training. The introduction of such a curriculum could transform public opinion to valuing the new EAA/T practitioner as a professional. This would be an important distinction from how stakeholders perceive those who are currently participating in the field on an amateur or non-professional basis (Fenwick, 2009).

It has been my experience as educator and course provider that the current one-year EAA/T diploma does not give students enough time to establish a sound base in key topics, equestrian, medicine and pedagogies. An expanded curriculum would have the time to revisit the basic ideas and build upon them. Two designs that may fit a future expanded EAA/T curriculum are the **spiral curriculum** and the **scaffolding** technique.

The idea of a spiral curriculum originated from Bruner (1973), who proposed that a constructivist education model, presented as a spiral curriculum, was the most effective way to teach and learn. Bruner's gained his appreciation of the process of education from the work of Piaget (1972) a psychologist who made a systematic study of the cognitive development of children. Bruner recognised learning to be constructive, an active process where knowledge construction is based on personal experiences and the continual testing of hypotheses. He maintained that a curriculum that repeatedly revisited basic ideas, secured higher levels of learning and mastery of the subject that could be carried through to future learning (Bruner, 1973). These words were resonated by Cantu and Farines (2007) and Putambekar and Hubscher (2005) who argued that it was important for learners to repeatedly revisit basic ideas and fundamental concepts until they fully understand and grasped the ideas (Putambekar and Hubscher, 2005). This method of **looking back** makes it possible for students to absorb and understand the basic and fundamental ideas of core topics, and then relate the knowledge to many other subjects and/or situations (Cowan, Morrison and McBride, 2010). A spiral approach to an EAA/T practitioner's curriculum could build a more complex learning environment, while at the same time developing EAA/T student intuitive behaviours learned from a prior knowledge that could be re-emphasised many times (Putambekar and Hubscher, 2005). As the spiral curriculum advances and new information is added, the student is able to carry out even more complex tasks. Learning becomes intuitive as the student learns how to grasp new ideas (Bruner, 1960). A spiral curriculum provides a constructive and reflective training at various levels, which could suit a new, future EAA/T curriculum.

A spiral curriculum for EAA/T needs the support of scaffolding. Bruner (1973) first mentioned scaffolding at a meeting of the Society of Child Research Development, where he suggested that children could complete new and more complex tasks if the appropriate support was orchestrated. Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) asserted that by supporting students with adult assistance (scaffolding) would help novice learners to perform tasks or achieve goals beyond their unassisted efforts. If EAA/T educators adopted this supporting role, and orchestrated spiral learning in the arena, EAA/T students could attempt component, manageable "sub-routines" of tasks that would become progressively more complex until learning had reached task competency. The educator support (scaffolding) could then be removed, a situation analogous to removing scaffolding when a building construction is almost finished.

Scaffolding could encourage EAA/T students to develop life skills and critical thinking skills combined with good decision-making. Eccles and Templeton (2002) maintain that, by using positive motivating experiences as scaffolding, the curriculum becomes psychologically and physically safe and supports feelings of competence and inclusiveness.

Ongoing assessment processes could be seen as scaffolding. Ongoing assessment provides students with the clear responses to their performance that will help them improve the next performance (in the spiral). Ongoing assessments give students the opportunity to develop thinking skills as well as fostering understanding. By integrating performance with formal feedback at various times during the course, ongoing assessment customises the curriculum by offering advice, further direction and understanding of a particular topic or concept (Weston, 2007). Ongoing assessment is designed to assist students in taking responsibility for their own learning by helping them focus on their own learning gaps. If ongoing assessments are integrated into the curriculum programme students could learn to perform vital skills with expertise (Fenwick, 2009) and become excellent EAA/T practitioners.

As the current EAA/T curriculum is a one-year diploma course, it only allows limited exposure to theory, the application of theory and practice. This gives students very little time for an authentic practice experience and the opportunity to grasp the principles of EAA/T intuitively. A spiral curriculum with the support of scaffolding could provide opportunities for intuitive thinking and learning (Research for Teachers, 2006). The late Steve Jobs (Isaacson, 2011) was concerned that if his employees at Apple relied on power point presentations, and not intuitive behaviours, it would prevent them from producing their most creative work (Isaacson, 2011).

2.16 Chapter Summary

The literature review revealed several gaps in the Israeli EAA/T curriculum and possibly other curricula worldwide. These gaps were associated with EAA/T's **cultural heritage and its organisational and academic practices.** All national organisations and academies providing EAA/T training moving in the direction of standard topics for syllabi, and provided traditional teaching and learning methods but were often unable to

raise the curriculum bar to produce graduate EAA/T practitioners with expertise. Gaps remained in the areas of **professional and personal development, training and admission policies and governance, the acquisition of knowledge, equestrian skills, pedagogic paradigms and the integration and infusion of advanced knowledge and skills.**

To provide stakeholders with confidence a future EAA/T curriculum must provide a level of professionalism and personal development that could meet the field requirements. Manogue and Brown (2007) maintain that a curriculum should be built from a

> *culture where collaboration and collegiality flourish and expert educator can process and deliver the contents of the curriculum to an adult population* (Manogue and Brown, 2007, p. 75).

If Academies and National organisations collaborated more, and were less concerned with membership, quantity of students and financial gain then they could focus on providing high quality curricula with assurances regarding the future employability and practice of its graduates. Morley (2010) argued that academies are not accepting the need for standardised content and skill repertoires that are the first steps required of a quality management programme. The curriculum bar could be raised in Israel if Israel's academies could invest in standard, fundamental core values, or rules and regulations that would render the educational experience more meaningful, reputable and viable. Core values are a hidden asset, acting as a guide for decision-making, and ensuring fairness and flexibility in pursuit of professional excellence. **Core values could create that crucial shared commitment from academia, national organisations for educators and students to reach the highest standards of practice.**

EAA/T curricula must be more than a list of topics; they should be an intellectual and cultural experience that is student-centred. EAA/T graduates need to fully grasp what their future role is through excellent experiential practice. Any new future curriculum requires educator expertise **that understands the process of learning and can apply theoretical knowledge in the authentic arena. EAA/T educators must be given the opportunity to learn how to understand a student's mission and be able to build their knowledge and capabilities,** reflecting in performance and relationships with clients and other stakeholders. EAA/T educators need to know how to operate motivating

pedagogic paradigms that encourage curiosity, creativity and self-esteem as well as critical and reflective thinking during experiential practice. Using active learning techniques with a deeper understanding of relationships with connections to other experiences and ideas (Dewey, 1933) could help EAA/T graduates **link theory to authentic practice**.

To professionalise the Israeli curriculum requires reconstruction. It needs to build educator expertise through career courses that understand students' emotional and intellectual development, both of which are entwined, and are dependent upon the success of the other. It should provide new ways to access daily operational problems allowing EAA/T trainees to have opportunities to take charge, and feel in control of their own destiny. EAA/T trainers must be helped to access their own perspective, getting new alternative meanings to their learning experience, interpreting reality and becoming critically aware. As Mezirow (1991) suggested, **adult learners must have opportunities to make meaning of their experience.**

EAA/T curricula should be built with cohesive educational units that benefit instructional activities and outcomes. Changing the design to a spiral curriculum supported by scaffolding could catalyse improvements in student instruction and learning, giving graduates the expertise they need. Building the curriculum as a dynamic process and not just a static inflexible structure interacts with educators, students and knowledge will facilitate the translation of theory into meaningful practice (Smith, 2000). When the curriculum process links theory to practice via the application of theory, it commits to emancipation, allowing both educators and students alike to be committed to the learning experience through dialogue and negotiation (O'Neill, 2010; Toohey, 2011).

Leaving EAA/T as a one-year diploma course in Israel could continue to provide an overview to EAA/T, where students get a smattering of the correct basic topics like pathologies, manifestations and normal human development and equestrian knowledge and skills, which is not sufficient for the task.

EAA/T, equestrianism and horsemanship cannot be separated. Historically, EAA/T was founded on an equestrian base. Equestrianism and horsemanship requires qualitative excellence from both educator and student. Today, not only is equestrian and horsemanship excellence often devalued, but also in some cases it has diminished. To

restore excellence, it must be realised that **equestrian educator experts are needed to teach equestrian skills, horse knowledge and management,** if **EAA/T graduates are to reach a high standard in equestrianism and horsemanship.**

A future curriculum must provide opportunities to **understand the horse,** and how to **develop and maintain strong human-horse interactions** that occur frequently and are achieved with a level of competency.

> *The entire Equine-Assisted Activities (EAA) industry has sprung up based on the assumed bond that horses and humans share (Mistral, 2007, p. 1*).

Graduates who have an expanded knowledge of equestrian, horsemanship and human-horse bonding will be able to provide a powerful holistic and positive approach that is essential if their clients and horses are to develop their full potential. Studying the richness of horsemanship and human-horse bonding will develop competent EAA/T practice in qualitative environments. For most part man, has built his relationship with the horse through training techniques. He has trained the horse to perform extremely difficult tests while he struggled for perfection and harmony with his horse. The human side of the relationship has taken the horse to its psychological limits. Payne, DeAraugo, Bennett and McGreevy (2015) argue that successful human-horse bonding can only develop through positive reinforcement training where fear is eliminated and the human recognises the ability of the horse and is able to respond correctly to the cues (Payne DeAraugo Bennett and McGreevy, 2015). Science now verifies that human-horse bonding is developed by building connections and partnerships in a non-threatening environment. Crews (2009) demonstrated an increased EEG synchronization between horse and rider. Gerke (2007) using heart rate variability (HRV) tests that established a relationship between horses and humans that can potentially determine the levels of stress of well-being in the human and horse when interacting.

Interacting with the horse provides multiple dimensions and possibilities, allowing positive feelings to emerge, empowerment, companionship, love, and a real sense of belonging. Partnering with the horse in various ground activities does open doors to other realities. Panksepp (2011) maintains that it is possible for humans to create a mental bridge that is trans-species. It is possible to pass a great emotional sensitivity between the horse and the human. A future curriculum should provide human-horse bonding

techniques that facilitate different opportunities for clients to grasp and normalize fears, through direct contact, and communication with the horse. For example, a future curriculum should provide opportunities to learn how the horse can connect to the human subconscious and reflect what is reality. How the horse can allude to truths by coming half way in human/horse relationships. How the horse can project what is seen as reality, and has the ability to offer another possible world.

A modern curriculum for EAA/T should include new knowledge from current research which is helping us understand the relationship between humans and horses. Our understanding of the human-horse bonding is growing as data from the field of neuroscience ethology and psychology in the field of trans–species psychology is providing information humans and non-humans share commonalities in cognitive thinking and emotions. Scientific research is finding that humans and other animals share the capacity to think feel and experience themselves and their lives (Panksepp, 2011). Still, Gerke's (2007) and Hausberger, et al. (2008) maintains that it is responsibility of the human to promote bonding, which the horse might reciprocate.

Expanding the richness of the human-horse bond develops quality environments in which both species can develop to their full potential. EAA/T practitioners who engage in human-horse bonding activities and therapy should have knowledge and competencies about the phenomena. In doing so they could provide and facilitate a powerful holistic and positive approach that will restore the role of the horse as central to any EAA/T programme.

Culturally, the foundations of EAA/T practice have emerged from powerful cultures of equestrianism, volunteerism and entrepreneurism. If any new future EAA/T curriculum is to be recognised as professional, it should **remember and rethink its cultural heritage.** Volunteerism and entrepreneurism**,** which is couched in individualism has flourished in several countries. However, neither has instilled confidence in EAA/T practice (Efrati, 2013 in Appendix 21.ii). If EAA/T practitioners are to achieve professional status and recognition of EAA/T expertise, then academia and national organisations should make a paradigmatic **and move towards a culture of collectivism and collegial collaboration. Then EAA/T could provide a professional programme necessary for stakeholder consensus and validation.**

Following this review of the literature I would recommend that in the future EAA/T training organisations should make a shift in policy that could build a new academic culture of training, and expertise, which in turn elicit evidence-based research and name EAA/T as a profession in its own right.

To fully research this topic this WBP continues by designing and implementing a research methodology to find and assess the opinions of stakeholders in the field of EAA/T. The next chapter describes this methodology, its pros and cons, validation and ethics.

2.17 Literature Reviewed

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		Morgan, M. (1962) *Xenophon, The Art of Horsemanship*, translated by Morgan, M. (1979,87,93) London: J.A. Allen and Co. Ltd
		Riede, D. (1988) *Physiotherapy on Horses*, translated into English, from the original published in German in (1986) Therapeutisches Reiten in der Krankengymnastik, translation by Dusenbury edited by Tebay, J, 1988, Publication in English, Omnipress Madison WI, USA
		Shkedi, A. (2012) *Traumatic Brain Injury and Therapeutic Riding*, published in Israel, Amazon.com.
		Sivewright, M. (1994) '*Thinking Riding'*, (Ed. 5th). Allen Publishing
		Strauss, I. (1991) *Hippotherapy, Neurophysiological Therapy on the Horse*, published in English in 1995 by Ontario Therapeutic Riding Association. Original Edition, 'Hipotherapie', published by Hippokrates Verlag Stuttgart.
		Trippett, F. (1974) *The First Horseman*, Time Life International, (Nederland) BV
Human-Horse Bonding	**Articles**	Crews, D. (2009) The Bond Between a Horse and a Human, available from nature proceedings, http://hdl.handle.net/10101/npre.2009.3454.1>(2009)
		Gehrke, E.K. (2007) The Human –Horse Heart Connection, Results of Studies Using Heart Rate Variability, Spring (2010) NARHA Strides
		Hausberger, M., Roche, H., Henry, S and Visser, E.K. (2008) 'A review of Human- Horse Relationship'. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*, 109 (1): 1-24
		Mistral, K. (2007) Heart to Heart: A Quantitative Approach to Measuring the Emotional Bond between Horses and Humans. *Horse Connection Magazine*, August, pp. 44-47
EAA/T Research	**Articles**	Basile, R. (1997) 'The Psychological Effect of Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy on Behaviour and Self-Esteem in Children with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD)'. *Scientific Journal of Therapeutic Riding*. www.frdi.net
		Bunketorp Käll, L., Lundgren-Nilsson, A., Blomstrand, C., Pekna M. and Nilsson, N. (2012) 'The Effects of a Rhythm and Music-based Therapy Program and Therapeutic Riding in Late Recovery Phase Following Stroke: A Study Protocol for a Three-Armed Randomized Controlled Trial Neurology'. *BMC Neurology Journal*, 12 (141): 2- 13.
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		Kohanov, L. (2001) *The Tao of Equus: A Woman's Journey of Healing and Transformation Through the Way of the Horse.* New World Library.
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		Payne, E., DeAraugo, J., Bennett P. and McGreevy, P. (2015) Exploring the existence and potential underpinnings of dog-human and horse-human attachment bonds, *Behavioural Processes*, Vol.125, (April 2016): 114-121
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		Schultz, P., Remick-Barlow, G. and Robbins, L. (2007) 'Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy: A Mental Health Promotion/Intervention Modality for Children Who Have Experienced Intra-Family Violence', *Health and Social Care in the Community*, 15 (3): 265-27.
		Selby, A. (2011) A Historical Perspective of Psychotherapy Involving Equines. *Scientific Journal the Federation of Riding for the Disabled in Higher Education,* pp.5-19, www.frdi.net/ (accessed 22nd October 2015).
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		Thelle, M. I. (2010) 'Horsepower Helps: Evaluation of Horse-Assisted Psychotherapeutic Treatment with Severely Traumatized Inpatients- Pilot Study', article based on two papers delivered at the 8th International Congress of Therapeutic Riding, *Scientific and Educational Journal of Therapeutic Riding*. www.frdi.net
		Would, J. (1998) 'Improved Gait in Two Children with Cerebral Palsy After Hippotherapy: Two Case Reports', *Scientific and Educational Journal of Therapeutic Riding.* The Federation of Riding for the Disabled International, pp. 51-58. www.frdi.net
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Research Dissertations		Brown, K. (2010) *Horses for discourses: the discursive construction of guided human equine interactions.* PhD Thesis University of Southampton, School of Health Sciences.
		Lujan, K. (2012) *The Challenges and Discoveries in Using Equine Assisted Psychotherapy Approaches by Counselling Practitioners in the South West*. PhD Thesis, University of New Mexico.
		Masters, N. (2012) *Equine Assisted Psychotherapy for Combat Veterans with PTSD.* https://research.wsulibs.wsu.edu: 8443/xmlui/handle/2376/3434
		Mullen, G. (2010) 'Integrating Equine-Assisted Activities and Therapy (EAAT) into a Higher Learning Institution', PhD Thesis Walden University, gradworks.umi.com/34/33/3433524.html
		Stickney, M. (2010) 'A Qualitative Study of the Perceived Health Benefits of a Therapeutic Riding Program for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders', PhD Thesis, University of Kentucky.
Psychology	**Articles**	Asay, T. P. and Lambert, M. J. (1999) 'The Empirical Case for the Common Factors in Therapy: Quantitative Findings' in Hubble, M., Duncan, B. L and S.D. Miller, S. D. (Eds) (1999) *The Heart and Soul of Change: What Works in Therapy*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
Psycho-Educational Theories	**Books**	Bobbitt, F. (1918) *The Curriculum.* Boston, New York, Chicago, Houghton Mifflin Company archive.org › eBooks and Texts › Universal Library
		Bruner, J. (1960) *The Process of Education*. New York: Vintage Books.
		Bruner J. (1973) *Beyond Information Given*. London: WW Norton Company Incorporated

		Dewey, J. (1938, 1997*) Experience and Education.* NY: First Touch Edition, Touchstone Book, Simon and Schuster.
		Durkheim, E. (1956) *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals*. London: Routledge.
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		Toohey, S. (2011) Reprint, *Designing Courses for Higher Education*, Open University Press.
Psycho-Educational Theories	**Articles**	Chickering, A.W. and Gamson, Z.F. (1987) 'Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education'. *Eric Doc 282 491 Journal Articles (080) Viewpoints (120) AAHE Bulletin*, March (1987).
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Chapter Three

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed the relevant research literature and found potential curriculum gaps that prevented effective professional development and a thorough knowledge base for the practice of EAA/T. Some of the gaps occurred in the design, teaching methodologies, preparedness of teaching staff and overall coherence of educator development. To confirm these findings and underpin the argument it was important to further research the EAA/T curriculum with a robust research methodology that engaged EAA/T practitioners and stakeholders who were in the field of practice or soon to enter the field.

To recap, many stakeholders from the medical professions have voiced their concerns about Equine Assisted Activities and Therapy (EAA/T) as a legitimate treatment modality. According to them, EAA/T practitioners have not acquired professional skills and the practice is still not evidence-based (Efrati, 2013; Anestis et al.; Appendix 18.i, Appendix 21.i and 21.ii).

This chapter described the robust method chosen for this research. It described the Delphi Method (Delphi), its design and implementation as a decision-analysis tool. It identified practical and/or professional problems associated with the Delphi Method while explaining data collection, and the scale and scope of this type of research. Central to the research is the question: What is equine assisted activities and therapy (EAA/T), and what would be a new future curriculum?

The chapter began by explaining why Delphi was chosen from a possible range of methodologies, why it was the best fit and what my justification was for choosing it. It continued with the strategic management process of the Delphi Method, its implementations and reviews possible pitfalls and their cure. The Delphi was separated into three modules: clarification of the analytical strategy and data collection. Explanation of the Delphi survey, ethical implications, the importance of dissemination, verification and sustainability. The methodology chapter concluded with a summation of the Delphi Method for collecting data.

3.2 A Range of Methodologies

There was a range of methodologies that could have been chosen to address the research question. To identify the **best-fit** methodology, it was necessary to investigate various perspectives and approaches. The practice of EAA/T is not always objective, and is grounded in its own praxis with its pluralistic ideas that are interpreted and contextualised with a high level of personal understanding by participants. EAA/T is not an exact science and results are not easily quantifiable. It is a holistic conversational technique used for special populations and fits the moulds of constructivism, and methodological naturalism (a working methodology). Constructivism is an epistemological belief about what one knows and how one comes to know it. Constructivists believe in individual interpretations of reality i.e. the knower and the known are interactive and inseparable (Tsai, 2009). A constructivist perspective ensured that collecting and analysing data was carried out under systematic, yet flexible, guidelines so that theories could be constructed from the data collected.

> *The guidelines offer a set of general principals rather than a set of formulated rules… Thus, data forms the foundation of the theory and analysis of data generates the ideas constructed* (Charmaz, 2002, p. 4).

By using a constructivist approach, data was collected and analysed. The analysis was conducted on the data as it was collected. It allowed the research to elicit an emergent theory of process grounded in the views of participants through multiple sources of data collection (questionnaires, focus groups and interviews). A constructive approach is open to refinement and can highlight the interrelationship of categories of information, which continue to be re-analysed as new data is collected until a point of saturation is reached (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Corbin and Strauss (2008) maintain that the best theoretical sampling requires this level of flexibility and the researcher should go where the analysis indicates (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Creswell is convinced that a method of flexible sampling of data allows one to collect data that may answer new questions that arise during analysis (Creswell, 2003).

Researching an EAA/T curriculum that is constructed from pluralistic ideas interpreted and contextualised by key players (participants) required a constructive and naturalistic approach, and would not have sat well with a quantitative methodology. Quantitative

research can be described as a formal, objective, systematic process for obtaining information about the world. It is a method used to describe, test relationships and examine cause and effect in relationships (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Although this is a reliable method of research, for this study it could have prevented important in-depth analysis of understanding what and how to generate a more professional and valid EAA/T curriculum. Quantitative research is positivistic, requiring the formation of hypotheses and use of statistics and mathematical models for the analysis of data (Creswell, 1994). Quantitative experimentation research does not befit EAA/T, especially as I, the researcher, investigated populations that according to O'Neill

> *could not be classified, counted, and constructed as statistical models in an attempt to explain what is observed* (O'Neill, 2010, p. 1).

However, having said that, I found that a questionnaire using a Likert scale, did

> *improve the quality and robustness of findings and cast a new light on qualitative findings* (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 41).

The Questionnaire using Likert scales was designed to confront a person with value judgments that may concern their reflections on reality or thoughts and feelings about a certain topic. Rensis Likert (1932), an American psychologist designed the Likert scale to be linear allowing respondents to describe their attitudes and feelings on a scale from one to five. It has become a popular application for assessing attitudes, perceptions or expectations and is popular in marketing and quality control surveys (Gob, McCollin and Ramalhoto, 2007).

3.3 The Best Fit- Qualitative Research Paradigm

The best fit was applied research, which could analyse a specific practical problem and use a qualitative naturalistic paradigm that was open to a constructivist perspective. Applied qualitative research follows a paradigm framework that is contributed to by the researcher's philosophy of life, his ontology and epistemology (Creswell, 1994). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) a naturalistic, qualitative paradigm is a research process that studies things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. A naturalistic

qualitative research paradigm builds a complex, holistic picture, formed with words reporting detailed views of informants and can provide an interpretation of the processes elicited by EAA/T (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Qualitative research follows a paradigm framework that is contributed to by the researcher's philosophy of life, his ontology and epistemology (Creswell, 1994). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) a qualitative research paradigm works well when the observer (researcher) is located within the world of the participants. Allowing important insights and knowledge to be drawn and conceptualised from personal experience and from other contexts of life and social institutions with which the researcher has no direct experience (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Philosophically speaking this means that I, as the researcher had to critically reflect upon, and interpret '**what I am actually going to do and not just know how to do it'** (Galle, 2007) To succeed I needed to believe both in the chosen methodology and the product it produces. Adopting these criteria provided me with milestones during the selection of my research methods. This perspective required me to think about **'who I am and the influences that formed me?'** Putting this in the context of the research, my personal and professional experience and knowledge influenced my perspective on the choice of research questions, research field and research tools.

Qualitative research is a technique that permits visiting the context of the participant's world, seeking to understand it and gather information from it (Creswell, 2003) so that recommendations could be made for a future EAA/T curriculum. It provided the opportunity to detach from the particular values and special interests of EAA/T to gain a level of understanding not based upon prior judgments. It allowed the deployment of a wide range of interconnected interpretive material practices,

> *focus groups, interviews, and empirical data, questionnaires that make the world visible* (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 3).

It gives voice to meanings of individual experiences, meanings that are socially and historically constructed. With an intent of developing a theory or pattern (Creswell, 2003), it provided the opportunity to cut across disciplines, fields and subject matter; investigating the who and how of decision-making, not just what, where, and when. It confronted the question, which *"data to collect, where when and how"* (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p. 144). It allowed for open-ended questions so that participants could present their views and I, the researcher, could interpret these views shaped by my own

personal experiences and background (Creswell, 2003). It allowed data collection in smaller, more targeted samples--often more effective than large random samples of quantitative research.

3.3.1 Grounded Theory

Using a qualitative technique invites a **Grounded Theory** strategy. Grounded theory made it possible for me, as the researcher, to begin my research methodology, "stay involved, and ultimately finish the project" (Charmaz, 2002, p. 4). Researching as a grounded theorist gave me a constructivist perspective that introduced new ideas and "honed my analytical skills" (Charmaz, 2002, p. 4). It made it possible to gather data constructed from my observations, and interactions during focus groups, interviews and the results of student questionnaires. It gave me the opportunity to pursue previous formed ideas from empirical data and build new ideas as data was systematically collected and analysed. This method managed and streamlined my data to construct an original analysis.

> *The guidelines offer a set of general principles rather than a set of formulated rules… Thus, data forms the foundation of the theory and analysis of data generates the ideas constructed* (Charmaz, 2002, p. 4).

Grounded Theory is derived from theoretical underpinnings from Pragmatism (Dewy, Mead, 1934 in Corbin and Strauss, 1990). It was well described by Barney Glaser and Anslem Strauss (1967) who were confident that it would help to legitimise qualitative research that was not widely accepted (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

> *It was generally labeled "unsystematic," "impressionistic," or "exploratory," and the flexible quantitative research "sloppy" or "unsophisticated."* (Glaser and Strauss 1967, p. 223).

Glaser and Strauss (1967) demonstrated that it was possible to build credible and trustworthy theories from data that was systematically collected and analysed. They suggested that

> *criteria of judgment be based on the detailed elements of the actual strategies used for collecting, coding, analyzing, and presenting data when generating theory, and on the way in which people read the theory* (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 223).

They were convinced that a grounded substantive theory corresponding closely to the realities of an area (EAA/T) would make sense and be relevant to those who are working in the same area, (other stakeholders in the field of EAA/T) (Glaser and Strauss 1967).

Grounded theory is a strategy that corresponds to this qualitative and constructivist research approach to gathering and continually analysing collected data. According to Glaser and Strauss (1967) a constant comparative methodology incorporates four stages:

> *(1) Comparing incidents applicable to each category*
> *(2) Integrating categories and their properties*
> *(3) Delimiting the theory*
> *(4) Writing the theory"* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 105).

Using grounded theory as a technique allowed this research to elicit an emergent theory of process, which was grounded in the views of participants through the multiple sources of data collection (questionnaires, focus groups and interviews). Engaging in grounded theory practices supported a constructive approach by opening it up to refinement while highlighting the interrelationship of categories of information that continued to be re-analysed as new data was collected until a point of saturation was reached (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Corbin and Strauss (2008) maintain that the best theoretical sampling requires this level of flexibility and that the researcher should go where the analysis indicates (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Creswell (2003) is convinced that a method of flexible sampling of data allows one to collect data that may answer new questions that arise during analysis. Grounded theory made it possible to use a constant comparative method, developing concepts from the data by coding and analysing at the same time (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998).

> *"This technique combined a systematic data collection, (coding, and analysis) with theoretical sampling to generate theory that is integrated, close to the data, and expressed in a form clear enough for further testing" (Conrad, Neumann, Haworth, & Scott, 1993, p. 280).*

Grounded theory confronted the question of which *"data to collect, where when and how"* (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p. 144). It allowed for open-ended questions so that participants could present their views and I, the researcher, could interpret these views

shaped by my own personal experiences and background (Creswell, 2003). It allowed data collection in smaller, more targeted samples, often more effectively than large random samples of quantitative research. It made it possible to construct analytical codes and categories from data, not from preconceived logically deduced hypotheses (Charmaz, 2008). It made it possible to advance theoretical development during each step of data collection and analysis, ensuring that

> *comparative analysis and different slices of data correct the inaccuracies of data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 223).*

According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), grounded theory allows data collection and analysis to be an interrelated process. Grounded theory is unique by the fact that it begins analysis as soon as the first bit of data is collected. In this study, analysis was necessary from the start because it was used to direct interviews, questionnaires and then the first iteration of Delphi. Analysing data from the beginning prevented missing any salient information, and provided a constant flow of clues to curriculum issues. Grounded theory guided me, the researcher, towards a full understanding of the issues. It was a method of discovery that grounded the theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Finally, grounded theory allowed me to conduct a literature review and to compare the findings to other sources after developing an independent analysis. It encouraged systematic detailed actions that increased the research credibility and trustworthiness and moved it beyond descriptive studies into the realm of explanatory theoretical frameworks (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Grounded theory has specific procedures for data collection and analysis. To achieve the most desirable results and to ensure an adequate sample size, participants were drawn from Israel and from the global EAA/T community. The instrument was administered in English, although any non-English responses were accepted and translated. The timeline for administering and collecting the completed questionnaire was approximately nine months.

3.4 Delphi Method (Delphi) – Chosen Methodology

The Delphi Method (Delphi) was originally developed in the 1950's by the Rand Corporation in Santa Monica California by Dulkey and Helmer (Meyrick, 2003; Cuhls, 2003) as a flexible research technique that explores new ideas within and surrounding a body of knowledge. As a systematic interactive forecasting method, it collects and distils anonymous judgments from experts, using a series of data collection and analysis techniques interspersed with responses (Linstone and Turoff, 2002). According to Linstone and Turoff (2002) the Delphi could be

> *characterised as a method for structuring a group communication process so that the process is effective in allowing a group of individuals, as a whole, to deal with a complex problem* (Linstone and Turoff, 2002, p. 3).

Mertens, Cotter, Foster, Zebrack, Hudson, Eshelman, Loftis, Sozio and Oeffinger (2004) suggests that an

> *expert is defined as one who is considered to be knowledgeable about the subject under consideration and capable of representing the views of his or her peers* (Merten et al., 2004, p. 170).

The Delphi was a useful group-centred communication device that facilitated the formation of group judgment, which maximises knowledge sharing and an exchange of ideas that eventually reached a consensus (Rowe and Wright, 1999). It was designed to conduct surveys in three or more rounds, providing participants with questions and feedback to their answers facilitating the reaching of consensus within the group (Adler and Ziglio, 1996; Gunaydin, 1998). Delphi allowed all expert participants to freely express opinions without undue social pressure to conform. Decisions were evaluated on their merit, rather than by who has proposed the idea. Delphi took care of issues by bringing together a group of experts who maintained anonymity as they put forward their personal opinions, judgments, fundamental differences and conflicting methodologies, known as raw data, which may influence the issue. It received raw data, modified and refined it, and then returns it as the collective thoughts of the group back to individual experts as feedback (Mitroff and Turoff, 2002).

Today, there are several versions of Delphi that are the result of organisations and policy makers adapting the original method (Linstone and Turoff, 2002). This research used the original version of Delphi, which was a classical consensus-making technique with a goal set to understand problems, opportunities, solutions and the ability to develop a forecast. Using this version, it was possible to stay true to the origins of Delphi that have four characteristics summarised here:

1. Anonymous response: opinions of each participant are obtained by formal questionnaire.
2. Iteration, a repetition of process that is affected by a systematic exercise that allows participants to refine their views after they receive controlled feedback.
3. Controlled feedback: informs participants of the other participants' views and allows them the opportunity to change their views.
4. Statistical aggregation of group response: allows for qualitative analysis and interpretation of data (Skulmoski, Hartman and Krahn, 2007).

This enquiry explored new ideas in a multidisciplinary information system, the EAA/T curriculum. The chosen version of Delphi was a new application of the method. The Delphi design chosen provided information from what was considered normal in the context of the perceived reality (current curriculum) and provided a window to the new reality to be negotiated to create impetus (recommendations for a future curriculum) for change (Scheele, 2002). The questions, which came from multiple insights, focus groups (FG) interviews (IN) student questionnaires (SQ) and the findings generated by the literature review, were designed to encourage participants to think forward to the future. To envisage the possibilities of transformation and transmission of the existing EAA/T curriculum into a new format. I aimed at analysing the Israeli reality where the demand for enhanced EAA/T professionalism continues to grow. Today, medical insurances and other stakeholders require more in-depth reporting, lesson planning and evaluations with recommendations (Appendix 21.i and 21.ii). The Delphi questions fitted the growing global EAA/T requests for enhanced professionalism.

The challenge of Delphi was to ask questions that conform to reality. The questions were by-products of previous interactions and were highly structured to induce convergence. However, ambiguities were introduced to encourage participants to redefine reality and to explore the limits of reality by asking questions that began with *'what if and why not'*

(Scheele, 2002, p. 43). It was hoped that this type of questioning would prompt the expert participants to create a reality that would facilitate the formulation of appropriate kinds of active intervention (Scheele, 2002).

3.5 Delphi Method: Why an Appropriate Method of Research

3.5.1 Personal Justification

There were several reasons why I chose to position my research and myself in the Delphi Method (Delphi). I saw it as an optimal fit because it is grounded in humanistic psychology. McLeod suggests

> *humanistic psychologists look at human behavior not only through the eyes of the observer, but through the eyes of the person doing the behaving* (McLeod, 2007, p. 1).

I know that an individual's uniqueness is connected to his or her feelings, which must be considered at all times and in any changing situation. This belief was the basis for my ethical standards that enabled me to recognise colleagues, students and clients have the right to be respected and their thoughts and opinions valued. Delphi fits this mind-set, as it generates a belief that the collective is more than just individuals interacting together, expressing their feeling and thoughts. It emphasised the interdependence of every individual, and puts the group's goals above those of the individual.

Patton (2002) maintained that the Delphi could provide external validity to research. Cuhls (2003) suggested that it could probe complex systems like an EAA/T curriculum and reduce copious amounts of knowledge about the system into single statements, which could then be judged. Matthew, Erdogus and Lindeman (2011) argued that the judgments elicited by the Delphi paradigm are a reliable method for generalising findings, as they are the result of **gradual reflective thinking outside the limitations of the research field, the study's participants and that of the cultural aspects of practice.** Delphi explored underlying assumptions or background information leading to the different judgments, it discovered new relationships or configurations that may have been overlooked by other analytical tools used for data collection (Matthew et al., 2011).

Delphi had a level of flexibility that elicited and supported data analysis. As an instrument, it was used in many different ways to collect information, and had no apparent *'right way'* to limit my approach to the findings (Matthew et al., 2011, p. 1). Collecting data in several stages rather than all at one time, allowed for adaptation of issues, or dropping or addition of questions relating to issues. This kind of flexibility began by gathering and analysing raw data from multiple approaches (FG), (IN) and (SQ). The information from this data plus the findings from literature review were formulated into the first round of the Delphi expert survey (DE). The multiple insights that emerged from the data were independently important as they represented the personal and public attitudes of stakeholders that later could be cross matched with the collective consensus reached using the DEs FG, IN and SQ discussed in more detail in the following pages (93-100).

The Delphi helped clarify the ambiguities found during the initial data collections by further assessment and re-assessment of the data through the DE survey.

The DE began with an initial questionnaire and two further rounds of questions, which were sent to the selected panel of experts thus allowing an extensive exploration of issues without engaging a large practitioner population sample. The small number of EAA/T expert participants around the globe brought to bear years of experience in various cultural setting and fields of practice on the analysis process. The outcome of this process was that distilled findings eventually became saturated and converged to form a collective consensus (Dalkey, in Linstone and Turoff, 2002). As the panel of experts represented different global populations the research was able to access the experiences of many EAA/T practitioners globally. Delphi brought together a group of experts who were unable to get together in face-to-face meetings in one virtual place because they were, in most cases geographically miles apart (Linstone and Turoff, 2002).

The panel of experts were able to focus on the task of providing answers to the questions in their own time without interruptions from other participants, any moderator or myself. Distances made it possible to eliminate certain social interactive behaviours, which were the norm during FG discussions and could have hampered emergent ideas and the development of new and creative knowledge (Dalkey, in Linstone and Turoff, 2002). It minimised the **biasing effect of dominant individuals, the possible distractions created by irrelevant communications and the biasing effects of group pressure**

demanding conformity (Dalkey, in Linstone and Turoff, 2002). Considered decisions were more easily obtained, because the experts remained anonymous and were not under any psychological pressure from other Delphi participants. Anonymity allows experts to share their different realities and facilitates finding common ground without confrontation.

This method of assessment and re-assessment revealed facts, feelings and actions (Scheele, 2002) of a panel of experts, who came from different realities and geographic locations where they practiced EAA/T. In these settings, the experts had their own way of dealing with complex issues of EAA/T training and accreditation. Delphi provided a forum where individual viewpoints on various issues could be safely aired and facilitated processes that allowed comprehensive consensus to be reached. Individual viewpoints rarely can provide the entire picture, but if they are brought together to form a dynamic group consensus then the results are more inclusive, non-hierarchical, stronger and should have a greater chance of being more influential (Snyder in Coy, 2003).

Skulmoski et al. (2007) maintained that Delphi was a consensus decision analysis method that offered solutions designed to improve goal setting, the understanding of problems and the developing of future training curricula. Linstone and Turoff (2002) proposed that the Delphi was a methodology that provided the framework were recommendations from past social agreements could be considered and renegotiated. For instance, the Delphi in this study answered the question that is regularly discussed in EAA/T forums without reaching conclusions. The question is: **how much equestrian knowledge does a prospective EAA/T practitioner need?** The Delphi method used in this study revealed clearer insights into EAA/T guiding principles of practice and what experts considered were the main EAA/T curriculum topics, which provided the answers needed.

Delphi served the research objectives, by exploring and discussing all possible future curriculum options to produce informed recommendations for a new future curriculum. Delphi provided an understanding why experts were making their particular judgments, as well as estimating the impact and consequences of these judgments (Linstone and Turoff, 2002). Delphi was an instrument that suited this enquiry, which required international collaboration to facilitate a rapid transfer of knowledge, and effective uptake across the global world of EAA/T (Matthew et al., 2011).

3.6 Problems Associated with the Delphi Method

Despite its strengths and suitability for this research, Delphi was extremely challenging and required much thought and attention to detail. From myself, as an insider researcher, it required personal discipline preventing me from imposing my views and preconceptions (Costley, Elliott, and Gibbs, 2010), which could have affected the Delphi structure and prevented others from contributing their ideas to the issues. Its design prevented me from falling into the potential trap of gravitating toward results, which endeavour to exhibit a high degree of convergence and avoid those that are highly divergent (Linstone and Turoff, 2002).

3.6.1 Design and Implementation Pitfalls

The Delphi Method (Delphi) is a valuable systematic forecasting technique that was used as a **decision–analysis** tool, and **not a decision–making tool**, which could have changed its purpose (Dalkey in Linstone and Turoff, 2002). Dalkey (2002) maintained that there are six desirable identified features of estimation, which can prevent the Delphi from becoming a decision-making tool and these are: honesty, accuracy, definiteness, realism, certainty and freedom from bias (Dalkey, in Linstone and Turoff, 2002).

Delphi was limited by the fact that it only uses one communication process (the written word) and focuses more on keeping the process efficient rather than encouraging *'wider latitude in the communication of information'* (Linstone and Turoff, 2002, p. 7). On the one hand, it prevented abstract questions being answered, while on the other hand written word methods of communication made it possible for me to manage interactions (Scheele, 2002). However, as predicted by Hsu and Sandyford (2007), two experts skipped a round because they found it was too time-consuming to respond to the large numbers of question/statements required in the three iterations of Delphi.

The Delphi method was subjected to extensive preliminary stages of design preparation in order for it to be **packaged** in a way that was palatable for the participant. Questions were designed not to be too complex to answer, or to be meaningless to participants who practice in different regions of the world (Jeste, Ardent, Blazer, Kraemer, Vaillant and Meeks, 2010, p. 325): Language was chosen not to evoke confusion among potential participants between applicants who came from several different countries (Thomson et

al., 2009). Questions selected related to the issues chosen and were designed to encourage thinking anew about practice. Linstone (2002) maintained Delphi could have problems of data collection when there were limitations on prioritisation of questions, as some answers could build explicit agreements about shared expectations with experts that produce biases and mistaken ideas (Linstone, 2002). If a bias (optimistic or pessimistic) were introduced or ignored, experts might leave the panel, which would threaten the strength of the expert survey (Linstone and Turoff, 2002).

Questionnaires were constructed in a way that experts could contribute not as aggressive stakeholders one minute and passive facilitators in another (Scheele 2002). Questionnaires were designed to impede experts with great expertise sending back too much abstract material that was difficult to wade through and extract *'nuggets of wisdom*' from the answers provide (Linstone and Turoff, 2002, p. 620).

Additional challenges were represented by the question: 'who should participate in the expert survey? The conclusion I came to was that experts should represent all interests within the EAA/T community. It was important to choose enlightened experts whose knowledge represented the position of the potential PEPs and EAA/T practitioners and clients (Day, in Linstone and Turoff, 2002). Experts were chosen from among external experts who had practices completely separate from my own (Day, in Linstone and Turoff, 2002).

The chosen experts were globally far removed from the Israeli curriculum. Some of the experts were found to be concerned with their own local work situation, and made judgments that were concerned with recent events and what is happening in their working environment and not those from his or her past (Linstone, in Linstone and Turoff, 2002).

Potentially as Delphi iterations continued the experts could have provided false information or find it harder to make decisive statements (Linstone, in Linstone and Turoff, 2002). Repeated exposure to content did not result in over familiarisation and **over selling** of perspectives as Delphi was designed to encourage participants to answer the questions and consider emergent ideas (Linstone, in Linstone and Turoff, 2002).

According Cyphert and Gant (1970) Delphi is not immune to deception. The anonymity of the approach can facilitate deception and distortion, especially as participants do not discuss issues, and if the experts know me, they could try to give a response they think I,

the researcher, was seeking. According to Linstone (2002), who conducted a survey where false information was added during the first round,

> *the participants did not ignore the false information but distorted their own subsequent responses to reflect acceptance of new input* (Linstone, in Linstone and Turoff, 2002, p. 570).

A time frame of three months was set for the panel of experts, who represented a comprehensive coalition of informants to answer questions in order to prevent the abuse of time and the loss of focus and resolution over a lengthy period.

> *Any human endeavour will seek recognition as a professional or scientific activity must clearly define the axioms upon which it rests* (Linstone and Turoff, 2002, p. 15).

3.7 Delphi Method: Management Strategy

Delphi Method (Delphi) management strategy developed from the central question posted by this research. Delphi objectives were to implement a rich data gathering methodology from multiple sources for decision analysis (Figure 3.4, p. 90, and Figure 3.5, p. 91) that would flow through a process that allowed assessment and reassessment, integration, triangulation and then documentation and generalisation.

The funnel shaped Delphi design, as seen in (Figure 3.1, p. 86), was adapted from a design by Skulmoski, Hartman and Krahn (2007) in which information is poured from a macro to micro perspective. It gathers analysed data from multiple sources to formulate the initial Delphi questionnaire, which is the first iteration of the Delphi expert survey. This questionnaire is then distributed to a panel of experts who have *"expertise, knowledge and practical engagement,"* with issues relating to the EAA/T curriculum (Scheele, 2002, p. 54). The panel of experts completed three rounds of questionnaires. During each round, the questionnaire was modified, refined and reduced to identify collective consensus until it becomes an ever-expanding network of factual propositions (Mitroff and Turoff, 2002). The strength of Delphi is in this iterative process. Finally, to ensure the robustness and validity of the process and its outcomes, the Delphi expert survey findings were

crosschecked against the original insights obtained from FG, IN, SQ, as well as from the literature review.

Figure 3.1 schematically describes the Delphi Method process. Information is gathered from insights, and the literature review. The analysed data was used to formulate the initial questionnaire, the first of three iterations of questionnaires for a panel of Delphi experts. The process of gathering data moved from macro to micro, as findings were analysed and re-analysed and feedback to the experts. The process ended with the formation of a collective consensus, documented and verified through triangulation with the original insights.

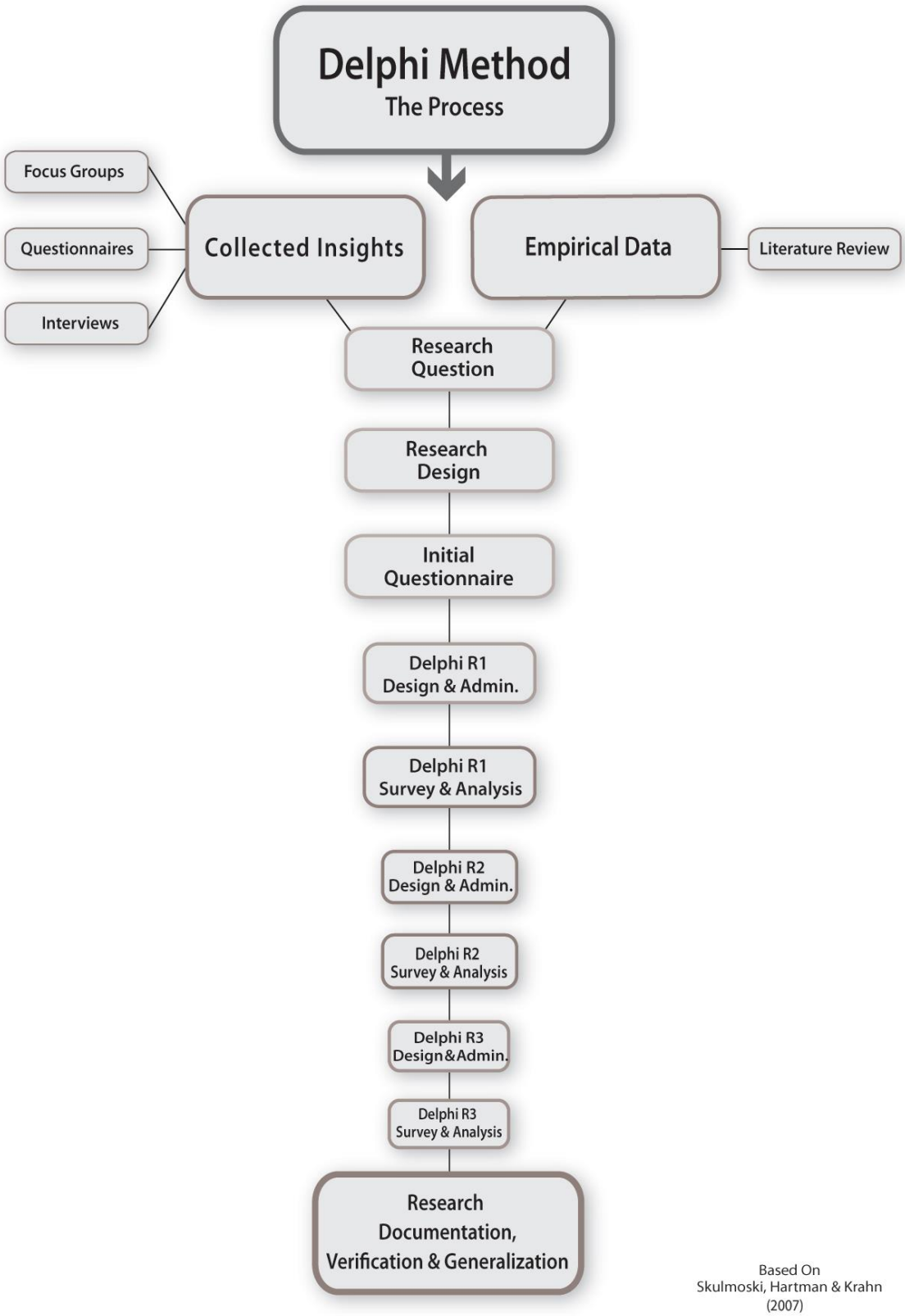

Figure 3.1: Delphi Method Collection Model

3.8 Delphi Method: Research Sample and Scale

The Delphi research sample was drawn from the USA, UK, Israel, Taiwan, and Hong Kong (Figure 3.2a p.87 and Figure 3.2b p.88). Participants were EAA/T course leaders /administrators, practitioners and therapists at different stages in their career, leaders of local EAA/T centres and Chief Executive Officers (CEO's) organisations providing EAA/T programmes. In addition, thirty-six prospective EAA/T practitioners from two separate but consecutive diploma courses answered questions at the beginning and end of the course. Seven focus groups with five to twelve participants were conducted. Five interview participants were chosen from among experienced EAA/T practitioners. Fourteen EAA/T experts were chosen for the Delphi expert panel. These experts were chosen from the global EAA/T community. Ultimately only twelve experts participated in all three Delphi rounds.

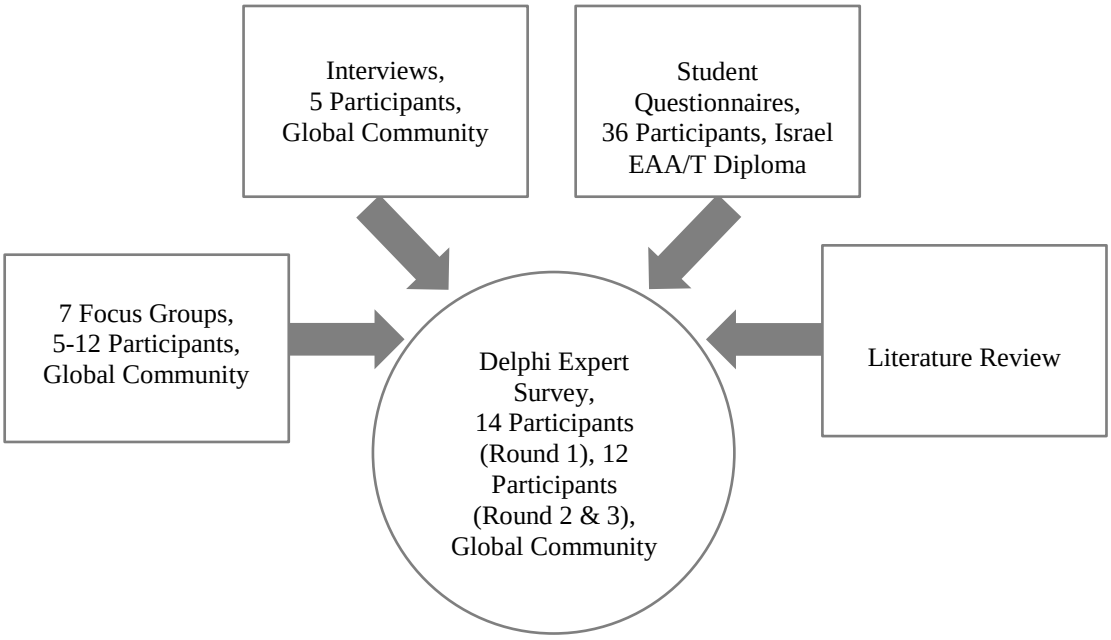

Figure 3.2a: Components of the Research Sample and Scale

Using different research tools, it was possible to collect data that represented a wide-area network of EAA/T practitioners and stakeholders, as Figure 3.2b below shows. The method avoided problems of reach, and access to numerous numbers of participants through a coordinated transfer of information, which ultimately allowed all information to arrive at one common destination host.

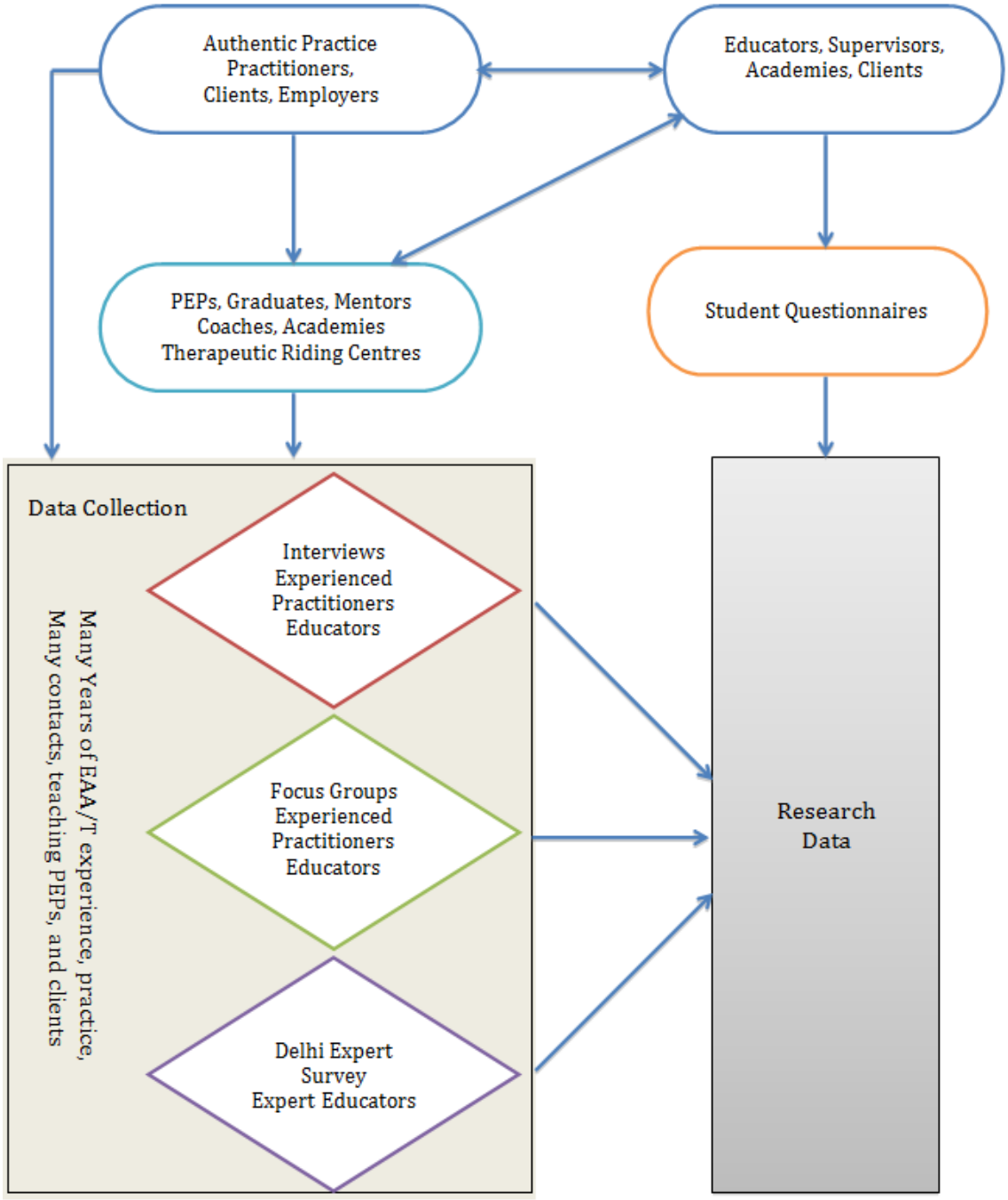

Figure 3.2b: Illumination of the Data Collection Scale

3.9 Delphi Method: Research Scope

The scope of the Delphi conducted in this research was the production of recommendations for a new future EAA/T curriculum in Israel. However, the scope could be extended if further research would be conducted focusing on world EAA/T education and illicit changes to global EAA/T curricula (Figure 3.3, p. 89).

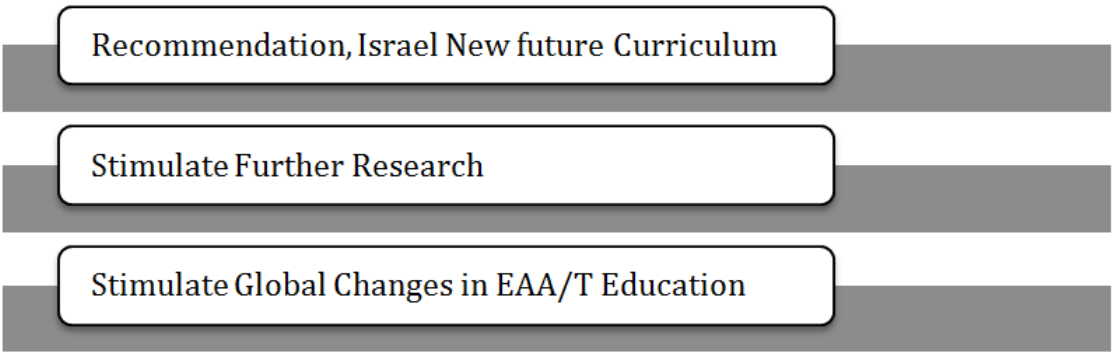

Figure 3.3: Research Scope

Figure 3.4 below describes the Delphi Process strategy, which is a logical plan to organise, implement and evaluate the methodology. It provides the programme objectives, and it demonstrates the sequence of data gathering and analysis, the outcomes and the strategies needed to create long-term impacts.

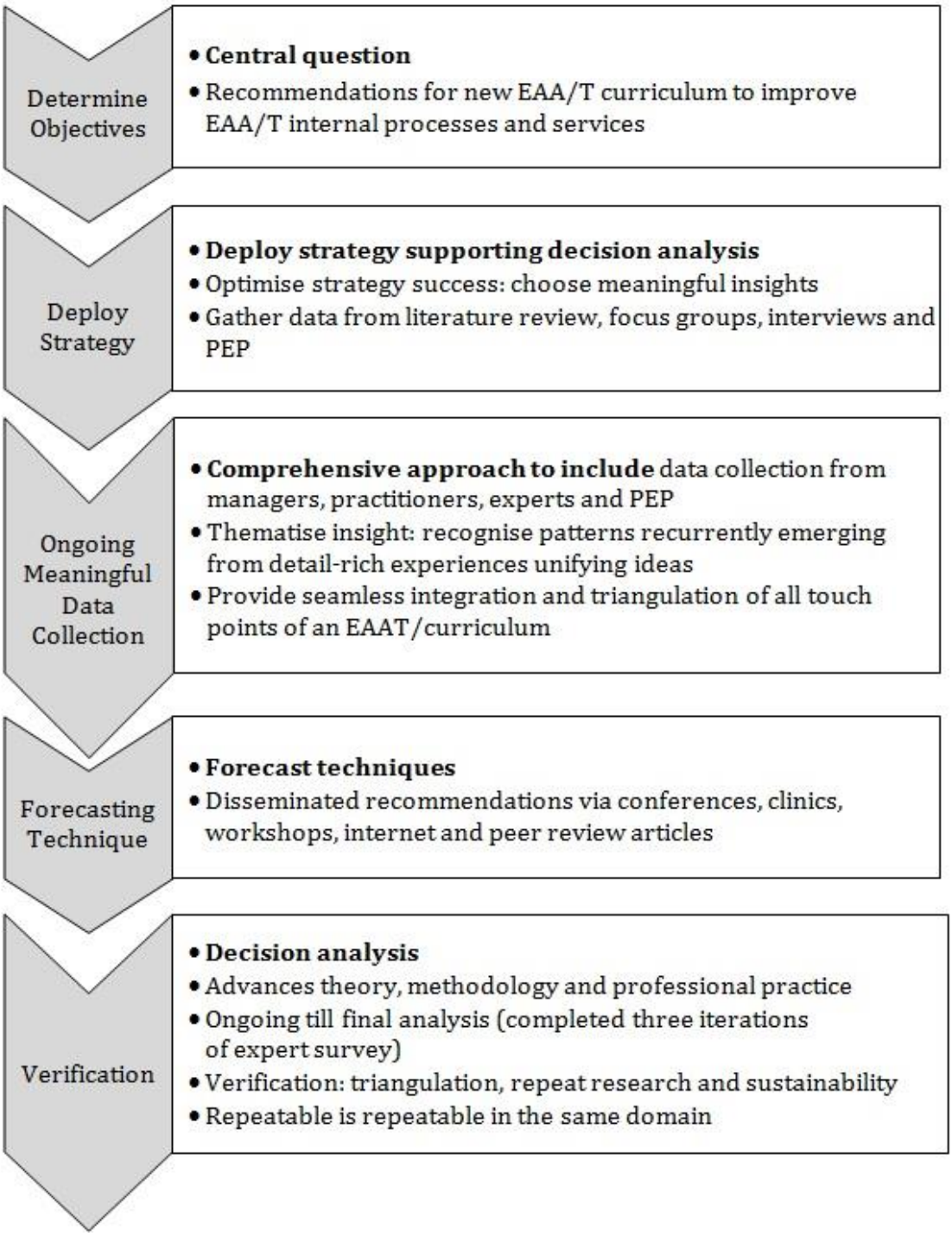

Figure 3.4: Strategy of the Delphi Process

Figure 3.5 below describes the five stages of strategic management of the Delphi Process. A continual flowing process was chosen to produce workable findings. The objectives were fixed and then the plan formulated. This was followed by assessment and re assessment ready for implementation, verification utilisation and sustainability.

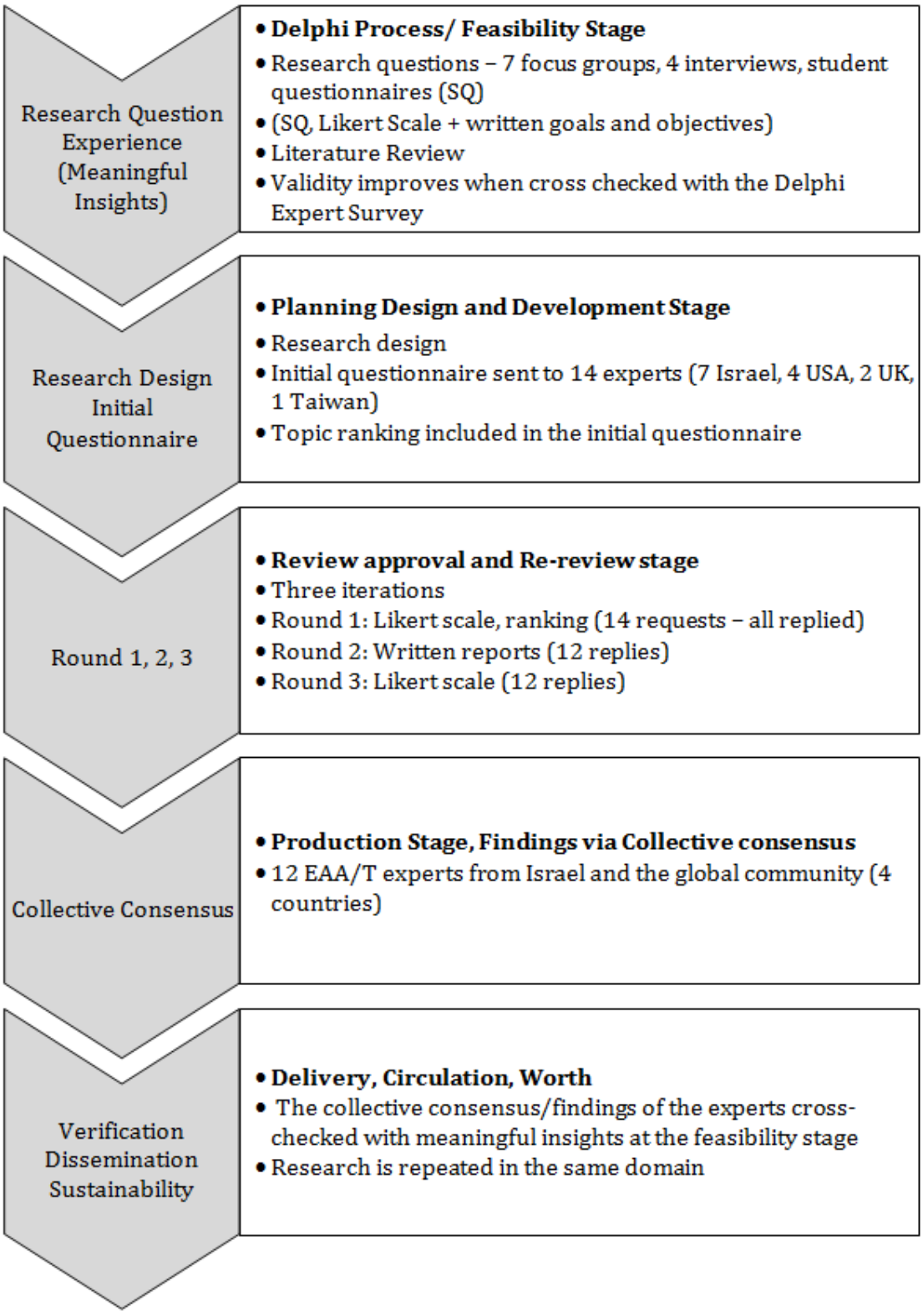

Figure 3.5: Five Stages of Strategic Management of the Delphi Process

3.10 Delphi Research Module 1 - Primary Data Collection Method, Focus Groups (FG) Insights

3.10.1 The Purpose of the Focus Group

Focus groups (FG) facilitated the data collection centring on specific topics of EAA/T (Sims, 1998). They produced rich data from insights and information that was less assessable without the level of interaction found explicitly in focus groups. The focus groups produced information that was used for the building of the initial questions of the DE survey. Later the information was used for cross verification with the collective consensus of the DE Survey.

The focus groups (FG) aroused rigorous debate amongst participants, exposing perspectives on criteria, ideas and insights. The collective nature of FG suited those who couldn't articulate their thoughts easily and found that participating in focus groups fosters a sense of empowerment and group membership (Jayasekara, 2012). The FGs provided a unique source of information, as I could observe the extent and nature of participant agreements and disagreements, which built joint constructs about a topic (Jayasekara, 2012). The FGs engage embedded views of peers and stakeholders from the global community into the research project. The focus groups produced a large amount of raw data that was used to build the initial Delphi questionnaire, and make the research more robust. FG discussions raised awareness to cross-cultural differences, levels of professionalism, standards and the operational application of the current curriculum.

The focus group (FG) evolved into a popular marketing tool from the Focussed Group Interview designed by Robert Merton for the radio in the 1940's. The FG tool was a fast and flexible data gathering technique, allowing results to be reported quickly and at minimum costs. According to Hyde, Howlett, Brady, and Drennan (2005) it captured the dynamics and interactions of participating groups and exploited this for the purpose of understanding the evolving relationship of the group to the product being researched. It is useful for groups of people who may have the same interests but not particularly the same sociological background and reasoning. The FGs ascertain community values without contaminating individual responses. It provided data from participants who have

had the experience of repeated access to the phenomenological aspects of EAA/T, and produced data that was subject to further qualitative tests (Merton, 1987).

However, according to Ho (2006) FGs are vulnerable with regard to the validity and reliability of the data collected:

> *as far as data collection is concerned, both in terms of procedure and the data itself* (Ho, 2006, p. 3).

As the same questions were according to the needs of participants in different FGs (English was not always the participants first language) the presentations, data collection and analysis might have been affected. Participants' opinions are subjective and can be easily influenced either by the group or by the method of presentation and presence of the researcher. Participants may choose not to express their point of view during a FG.

Even though it was a key feature of the FGs to encourage active engagement, it could have been difficult to maintain an in-depth discussion about the topic during the session as people often shifted the conversation to what was important for them, which was not necessarily connected to the main research topic or to the research question. Additionally, as a researcher working alone, it was problematic to ensure that all facts were reported neutrally and rigorously. FGs produced a copious amount of data, which made it often difficult to sort relevant material from the irrelevant. Coding, categorising and thematising is the method I used to reduce the data generated by the FGs prior to analysing it (Webb and Kevern, 2001).

3.10.2 Focus Groups (FG) Implementation Process

Focus group (FG) participants were first asked to sign a consent form to agree to attend the focus group sessions (Appendix 3.ii and 4.i). During the sessions eight questions relating to the central research question were asked. The sessions lasted approximately sixty minutes and were recorded, and later transcribed. Insightful verbatim transcriptions were used. Findings were reported if they did not misrepresent the responder or broach their identity (Oliver, Serovich and Mason, 2005). This issue was particularly pertinent when English was not the first language of the FG participants (Standing, 1998;

Fairclough, 1993; Oliver, et al., 2005). The Hebrew audiotapes were translated and transcribed into English, (Appendices 5.i, 6.i and 7.i).

3.11 Delphi Research Module 1: Primary Data Collection Method the Interview (IN) Insights

3.11.1 Purpose of the Interview (IN)

The interviews (IN) were another research tool chosen to gather raw data for the initial questionnaire. Its purpose was to further seek secure information about current curricula from the interviewee. The personal interview is a tool that penetrates and goes to the **living source** by offering researchers access to people's ideas, thoughts and memories in the participant's own words (Platt in Grubium and Holstein, 2008). It offers the interviewee an opportunity to express his or her feelings about issues, and why they hold certain opinions and beliefs about the issues being researched (Harrell and Bradley, 2009). In my interviewing experience interviewer and respondent were treated as equals. We were both creating meanings during the interviewing process. We were both **active**, rather than the respondent being seen as just the passive object of the interviewer's attempted control. During the interviews, all forms of human communication, social cues, such as voice intonation, and body language were recorded and provided information I used during analysis when I needed to clarify issues that were obscured by language or cultural differences (Opdenakker, 2006).

Some disadvantages of INs that I was aware of and guarded against, were that they could contain much abstract material, making it easy to go off task and include material that is not relevant to the topic (Opdenakker, 2006). From an insider researcher position with enhanced knowledge I needed to guard against influencing participant's answers to my questions (Costley et al., 2010). To the best of my ability as the researcher I tried to keep my data gathering technique free from contamination and personal bias (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

3.11.2 Interviews (IN) Implementation Procedure

An invitation and consent form was sent to the interviewees prior to the interview (Appendix 3.iii and Appendix 4.ii). Five telephones INs were carried out with experienced educators from the field of EAA/T training who were executive directors and course leaders. Interviewees were chosen so each had been practicing for seven years or more, with a wider view of the EAA/T curriculum. The same eight component questions were used for all INs. The interviews were a one on one **discovery of mutual** experiences the questions were sometimes presented differently, or split into relating themes of inquiry (Platt, 2008). As IN phone calls were carried out with long-distances between the researcher and the interviewee they were not contaminated by me or by other interviewees (Opdenakker, 2006). Some interviews were carried out over Skype and were audiotaped and then transcribed verbatim. Still, naturalised words or writings were only used in the reported findings as long as they did not misrepresent or prejudice the participant in any way. Generally denaturalised Standard English became the theoretical academic language (Standing, 1998).

3.12 Delphi Research Module 1: Primary Data Collection Methods Student Questionnaire (SQ) Insights

3.12.1 Purpose of Student Questionnaires (SQ)

The purpose of the student questionnaire (SQ) was to serve the need of collecting data from participants who interact most directly with the existing curriculum. The SQ gathered ideas and insights regarding a perceived ideal EAA/T curriculum from students active in the programme, which were used to design the questions of in the initial Delphi (Leung, 2001). The EAA/T students participating in the study had a limited amount of knowledge regarding the efficacy of the EAA/T curriculum, but nevertheless their contribution was welcomed (Leung, 2001). Further, the SQ did not gather verbal and non-verbal behaviours, it only gathered information from a single individual observed for a fixed period of time (Phellas, Bloch and Seale, 2011).

The advantages of the SQ were that the students answered under conditions that guaranteed their anonymity. The SQ was not time consuming as the answers were

standardised making data compiling reality fast and easy (Milne, Heinrich and Morrison, 2008).

While administering the SQ, I was aware that completing the SQ could have been frustrating as students may have felt they were unable to fully express their thoughts in a standardised answer format. Students were informed why the results were being collected, and were asked to reply honestly, as negative responses are just as useful as more positive opinions (Milne et al., 2008).

3.12.2 Implementation Procedure Student Questionnaires (SQ)

The student questionnaires were designed to have short and uncluttered questions that encouraged students to complete the SQ and, prevent opportunities to probe or clarify misunderstandings (Phellas, Bloch and Seale, 2011). The SQ was offered to EAA/T students – on the first and last day of the programme. The first questions ask students to present in writing their personal and professional goals, and are followed by thirty-six topical questions related to the EAA/T curriculum (Appendices 2. iv, 2.i and 2.ii). The data from these questions was collected using **Likert scales**, which represented the students' opinions and perceived level of importance for each question. A Likert scale is a psychometric scale (Bertram, 2009) designed to offer logical scope to the questionnaires. When used in qualitative research it can improve the quality and robustness of findings (Allen and Seaman, 2007).

However, using a Likert scale assumes that the strength of experience is linear, i.e. on the continuum from **strongly agree to strongly disagree** (Bertram, 2009), and presumes that attitudes are measurable in that way. Using the terms **strongly agree or strongly disagree** can hide and distort information and even frustrate participants. In addition, terms can be mistaken, as attitudes are not always consistent and can change in any additional round of testing (Gob, McCollin and Ramalhoto, 2007).

In this research a five-point rating scale was used, which only allowed EAA/T students to express how much they agreed and or disagreed with a particular topic, and did not allow the opportunity for additional comments. Using such a scale did lack clarity and exactness because the limited number of options along the scale to choose from is not sufficient to elicit evidence or to make predictions and/or statements about the future. The

Likert scale is disadvantageous when students become influenced by the scale ratings and find that they are answering all the questions in the same way. As the researcher, I guarded against infusing a level of bias into the questions or answers the students considered.

3.13 Delphi Module 2: Three Iterations - 1st Iteration (Round One) - Initial Questionnaire of the Delphi Expert Survey

3.13.1 Purpose of the First Iteration - Initial Questionnaire (IQ)

The purpose of the Delphi's survey, 1st iteration was to produce an initial questionnaire (IQ) that would allow participating experts to 'brainstorm' (Schmidt, in Sims, 1998) and to fully understand what the survey was all about, encouraging them to give free and complete answers (Delbeq et al., in Sims, 1998). The IQ asked experts to rank topics and provide comments as well as answer open-ended questions (Hsu and Sandford, 2007). The questions were designed to encourage experts to think anew and futuristically (Appendix10.i).

3.13.2 Implementation Procedure - Initial Questionnaire (IQ)

Before the IQ was sent out an informed consent letter was sent to explain clearly the reason for the research and the request for participation in the survey (Appendix 8.i) as well as assuring anonymity, and feedback to responses (Appendix 9.i, 10.i and 11.i). The IQ was distributed to the participants by an online software and questionnaire tool, Survey Monkey. The Survey Monkey platform provided a format that allowed research anonymity, and included a Likert scale and the possibility of ranking topics. After completion of this questionnaire the experts received feedback of the collective response. The feedback gave the experts another chance to verify their opinions and the opportunity to change or expand their responses. Following the responses, the IQ was modified to facilitate the emergence of main topic questions from the experts' responses for Round Two (Appendix 11.i).

3.14 Delphi Research Module 2: Three Iterations - 2nd Iteration Round Two Questionnaire

3.14.1 Purpose of the Second Iteration - Round Two

The purpose of the second iteration was to send out a new questionnaire that refined the questions of the IQ by incorporating the experts' responses (Appendix 12.i). In this round like the previous round experts received through feedback a collective view of participants' perspectives and an opportunity was given to clarify or change views. The method of successive rounds strengthened the reliability of interpretation and analysis of data (Skulmoski et al., 2007).

3.14.2 Implementation of Round Two

During **Round two** questions were formulated from the collective response of Round one and my personal reflection. Certain topics chosen for round one were eliminated while others were added and some questions were concentrated on specific emergent issues (Appendix 12.i and 13.i). The design of each questionnaire required the experts to focus on a future EAA/T curriculum. Again, upon completion the collective findings were returned to the experts who were again given an opportunity to clarify their views, make changes or expand their responses. After analysis and modification of the questionnaire it was ready to send out as Round Three (Appendix 14.i).

3.15 Delphi Research Module 2: Three Iterations - 3rd Iteration, Round Three – Questionnaire

3.15.1 Purpose of the Third Iteration – Round Three

The purpose of the third iteration questionnaire was to verify the findings from the previous two rounds, to bring the Delphi method to a close summarising collective consensus areas that were reached as well as areas where no consensus was reached. In addition, this stage served to facilitate an understanding of the boundaries of the research and where in the future results might be extended (Skulmoski et al., 2007).

3.15.2 Implementation of Round Three

Round three, was conducted following a similar process that was used in round one and two. The rich data was gathered, analysed and the collective findings were sent back to the experts for any further responses. Once again this allowed the experts the opportunity to change or expand their responses or comment on the collective perspectives. However, round three was different than the other two rounds by the fact that it was presented as **an expanded questionnaire** that asked participants to **indicate how much they agreed or disagreed** with each question using a Likert scale of 0-5 (Appendix14.i). The questions this time were not open-ended and didn't require coding as they had a pre-determined set of answers set to achieve collective consensus or show that consensus was not achieved (Skulmoski et al., 2007).

The Delphi Method was completed after this third round as the research questions were answered and consensus was achieved where feasible. Stability of results amongst the experts, and mean scores of the final round determined the findings. Consensus means there was theoretical saturation, or sufficient information exchanged, so that the discussion was closed. Consensus can be defined as a professionally acceptable solution, which can be supported even if it was not the first choice of everyone. Consensus in this Delphi process was reached when a certain number of agreements fall within the 80% range (Hsu and Sanford 2007; Scheibe, Skutsch and Schofer, 2002; (Appendix 14.i and Appendix 15.i).

Figure 3.6 below (adapted from Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 12) shows the movement of data in the Delphi Method. Data was gathered, analysed and then shared with experts. In three iterations, it goes through experiences of construction and reconstruction and finally reduction before verification.

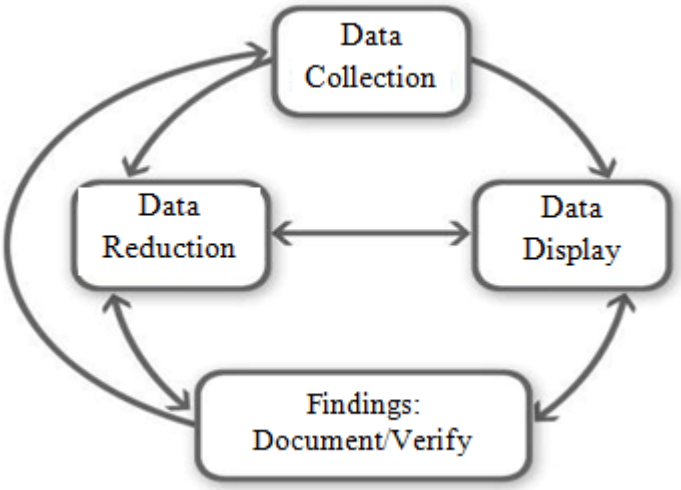

Figure 3.6: Components of Data Analysis: Interactive Model

3.16 Delphi Research Module 2: Post Data Collection Challenges

Post data collections for the Delphi were challenging, as questionnaire results and written statements had to be verified, generalised and documented; areas of agreement and disagreement were noted. The verification process continues throughout the extended time of the Delphi Method (Skulmoski et. al., 2007) making the selection and simplifying and transformation of data complex and challenging. A potential trap for myself as the researcher was the temptation to gravitate toward results, which exhibit a high degree of convergence and avoidance of those that were highly divergent (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Additionally, I was aware that experts might leave the survey because their views were not sufficiently explored, regarding the consensus as artificial (Turoff, in Linstone and Turoff, 2002; Scheibe, Skutsch and Schofer, 2002). Lastly, I guarded against the possibility of an unnatural over-consensus emerging when group feedback persuades conformists to capitulate to group pressures temporarily, on paper (Linstone and Turoff, 2002), thus invalidating the findings.

Final conclusions were only effectively drawn and verified when there was a definite link between resulting outcomes and initial propositions (Miles and Huberman, 1994), and the research could be replicated using the same methodology with different variables.

3.17 Delphi Research: Validity

Validity was one of the main concerns of this research especially when the instrument used was as large as the Delphi Method. Validity encompasses the entire organisation of the research as well as establishing whether the findings were indeed measurable and had met all the criteria of rigorous research. The Delphi Method gathers data through descriptions and interviews and questionnaires. The data is observational and experiential which can be valid measurement tools if they are really measuring the domain of the construct in question (EAA/T curriculum). According to Johnson and Christensen (2008), this method of data gathering and collecting is the only valid way "*to find out about the world around us.*" The roots of validity are founded in positivism (Golafshani, 2003, p. 599) where research is regard valid insofar as it can further some intended objective. However, as much as I appreciate this type of validity and the positivistic approach it did not fit well in this qualitative paradigm as it could only relate to the world as an unchanging place, with universal laws and the view that everything occurring around us can be explained by knowledge of these universal laws.

Positivism is relative and does not engage in the meaning of contents and contexts of different persons, cultures and eras (Johnson and Christensen, 2008). It focuses on describing the phenomena e.g. how things are, and what is the relation between cause and effect (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). In this way positivism, can remain impartial and objective and avoid any controversies in the social arena. Positivism believes that all scientific creations can be explained by the natural and or physical world preferably in mathematical axioms (accepted truth). In this qualitative research, validity had much greater scope as it covered the whole operation from the historical examination of the development of the EAA/T curriculum to the validity of the measurement. It was the overarching quality controller of the study. Still, validity could be corrupted especially if I the researcher had allowed personal bias or expectations to affect what I saw and did not see during data collection (Johnson and Christensen, 2008). Equally, as in any social research, validity could have been jeopardised if the right questions were not asked, preventing participants from the opportunity to give answers befitting the questions (Johnson and Christensen, 2008). As Denzin and Lincoln suggested the explanation must fit the description for qualitative research to be valid (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). If the instrument does not examine the pluralistic ideas from the participants, interpret and

contextualise the findings correctly or if data is affected by factors other than what the study is focusing on, then the data will be invalid (Seliger and Shohamy, 2001). Validity is one of the few guidelines to protect against self-delusion, or the presentation of defective or invalid conclusions. The result of validity will ensure that the arguments I present are **sound, well grounded, justifiable, strong and convincing** (Kvale, 1995; Higgins and Straub, 2006). Validity is put into question if the researcher does not explain or attempt to explain when problems arise during or upon completion of the research or unexpected results materialise. For instance, repeated rounds of the Delphi Survey could alter the experts' performance through familiarity with the tool, or, due to a loss of participants that may occur during recruitment and/or data collection (Higgins and Straub, 2006). Golafshani (2003) suggests that using a repetitive method may sensitise the respondent to the subject matter and hence influence the responses given (Golafshani, 2003).

Validity has the overarching responsibility of the whole study. It under-grids the study's truth-seeking purpose, its organisation and the accuracy of the data (Cho and Trent, 2006). For internal validity required me to remain impartial and consider the research without bias (Porter, 2007). It required and ensured that written accounts of theoretical presuppositions and historical perspectives from co-workers and me were sound. For external validity, it required the research methodology and findings to be repeatable or the findings be used in other settings, where other EAA/T practitioners are engaged in researching EAA/T curricula.

3.18 Delphi Research: Reliability

Conversely, as much as this constructivist, qualitative research befits validity, it could have had some problems with reliability. Unlike quantitative research, a qualitative research paradigm relies upon interviews and focus groups, and does not use the same instruments needed for quantitative research. Quantitative research depends on an instrument's reliability, meaning it relies upon the consistency of the instrument used and its measurement. It uses instruments like scales and formulae and mathematical axioms. These are instruments, which can only provide measurements they are designed to measure. They are instruments not generally used in qualitative research (Stenbacka, 2001). However, in this research the Likert Scale was a useful tool for the ranking of

topics and supported the Delphi's Methodology, which required the measurement of thoughts and opinions and explanations, to achieve research expectations.

Delphi Method required a degree of responsibility and validity from the research design and myself as the researcher. According to Golafshani (2003), if the research is carried out responsibly then there can be a sense of reliability. However, Higgins and Straub (2006) argued that reliability is an ideal state that is never achieved because reliability is complicated by being multidimensional. Each dimension reflects different conceptual perspectives. For instance, a dimension that reflects stability does not indicate internal consistency. Higgins and Straub (2006) suggest that stability comes when the tests are repeated several times. This may seem to fit with the three iterations of the Delphi process, but the internal consistency of the tests changed, which could have caused neglect of the same measurement characteristics.

Some advocates of qualitative research are reassessing reliability as a criterion for the qualitative research paradigm (Golafshani, 2003). If in the future reliability is conceptualised as trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), rigour, and quality, we may be able to think of qualitative research as reliable, but at the moment the concept of reliability, which reports the functioning of instruments used in quantitative research has no place in qualitative research paradigms where the research obtains its data from multiple sources of information.

3.19 Delphi Research: Triangulation

Triangulation refers to the use of more than one research tool in the investigation of a process to enhance confidence in the ensuing findings. The term derives from surveying, where it refers to the use of a series of triangles to map out an area (Bryman, 2004) The idea of triangulation is very much associated with measurement practices in social and behavioural research. An early reference to triangulation comes from the idea of an *unobtrusive method* proposed by Webb and his colleagues, who suggested

> *once a proposition has been confirmed by two or more independent measurement processes, the uncertainty of its interpretation is greatly reduced. The most persuasive evidence comes through a triangulation of measurement processes* (Webb et al., in Bryman, 2004, p. 1).

Triangulation within this study meant that it adopted a strategy that gathered analysed data from multiple sources to eliminate possible errors in observation. According to Bryman (2004), two or more research techniques within the strategy can reduce the bias and lead to convergent validity (Bryman, 2004).

Triangulation confirmed research findings within the Delphi process as well as the review of the empirical literature. Triangulation demanded that all multiple data sources must carry the same domain (EAA/T curriculum), and be fixed at the triangulation points, which in our case were gaps in the curriculum (Richardson, in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Triangulation validated both my internal and external enquiry (Golafshani, 2003), which is within and outside the Israeli EAA/T stakeholder population.

3.19.1 Data Collection and Analysis: Quality Assurance Process

The quality assurance process in relation to the study's data collection and analysis was a key issue. Because this research could have a significant impact on the world of EAA/T, education and knowledge development, it was essential for the data collection and analysis to provide more than a reasonable view of what has happened and what is currently happening in the field of EAA/T. According to Miles and Huberman (1994) if one strives for high standards, the objectivity, data collection and analysis will be reliable, and dependable.

In order for data collection and analysis to be objective, reliable and dependable, the research methodology had to be described in detail, giving a complete picture that included "backstage information" (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 278). The methodology and procedure was written and visually recorded, showing the sequence of data gathering. From the start of data gathering the process was clearly described, documented and displayed for readers to draw their own conclusions related to the specific data. I was explicit about my role as an inside researcher. As someone who had been working in the field for three decades, I was very aware that I could inject my thoughts and feelings into the findings. From the beginning of data collection, I read the transcripts, coded and analysed them many times, using different approaches so that I didn't inject my assumptions into the findings and remained as objective as possible. The vast amount of data has been retained and is available for reanalysis by others (Appendix 1.xiv, 6.i and 7.i.).

Data collection and analysis required a level of **reliability and dependability**, which I would rather refer to as **responsibility**, **trustworthiness** and **accountability**. This research was a longitudinal study; it required a sense of care and quality control, especially as the findings came from multiple insights over a period of time. Participants gave very similar responses based on their own experiences, providing data analysis stability. Collectively these responses were extremely significant and consequential to the central question and its related questions (Table 4.1a-4.4b, pp. 122-125, Appendix1.i-1. ix).

Data collection and analysis began when participants from focus groups and interviewees were asked the central question, which was broken down into eight component questions (p. 117). It continued with collections and analysis from student questionnaires and was backed by the findings of the literature review. The analysed information was then used to start the initial iteration of the Delphi expert survey. Even though the Delphi expert survey was a genre change, in that the questions were amplified for the experts, the new research data and analysis demonstrated meaningful parallels across all sources over a period of time (Table 4.1a-4.4b, pp. 122-125, Appendix 1.i -1.ix).

Throughout the study, responsible methods of coding checks were made to ensure dependability and trustworthiness. Even though participants had different levels of education and perhaps personal biases and represented different cross sections of EAA/T society, there were acceptable agreements made and participants' accounts converged (Appendix1.i-1. ix).

a. Internal Validity

The findings were built from rich and meaningful insights from participants of the EAA/T global community who understood what is the reality of the job. The findings were replicated several times and could be considered accurate and the participants' recommendations reliable, (Appendix 1.i-1.ix). By using a technique of triangulation, the findings converged and cross-matched, demonstrating that the gathered data was well linked to the emerging theory. However, the technique also revealed several gaps in the curriculum that need to be addressed (Kolb, 2012: Creswell, 2007). Analysed data from rival practitioners, students and experts in the field ultimately confirmed the propositions

were explicit. These propositions included areas of uncertainty as well as negative evidence (Appendix 1.i).

b. External Validity

The findings, which are preserved and un-obscured in the study, can be applied to most global EAA/T curricula (Figure 3.2b). The findings represent an external view of the curriculum through the perspectives of practitioners and experts from the diverse EAA/T global community in different countries. When participants related their own experiences, there were consistencies, regardless of **where** they were practicing EAA/T in the world. The narratives, which were rich descriptions of practice from many, constantly cited 'what is' and 'what they thought it could be'. Globally participants talked about gaps in their local curriculum, which included the lack of standards, professional training, education, career and money incentives. The study could easily be replicated, and it is my recommendation is that the findings be tested further to ensure reliability and trustworthiness (Creswell, 2007).

c. Utilisation, Action

Finally, utilisation must be considered as pragmatic validity. Could the participants and stakeholders take action after the study? Are the findings (recommendations) workable? Could they reach potential adopters? According to Rogers (2003), use is only possible if the recommendations can reach potential adopters and they only become effective once they being used, and passed user to user (Rogers, 2003).

In this case, the recommendations are available to potential adopters, and are supported by a new foundation curriculum, which is the first step towards a spiral curriculum. So far, local and global organisations have expressed interest and some have already taken steps to adopt ideas and revise curricula. These steps are potentially starting to shift policy and bring about change.

Utilisation should not be harmful to colleagues or any participants or stakeholders in the EAA/T service industry. Ethically, the study implications are continually thought about and discussed, (p. 108). This research has clearly documented its reports so that readers can fully understand the methodological process. This includes the assessment of what

was done, how it was done, and the credibility of the findings (Figure 3.4, p. 90, and Figure 3.5, pp. 91).

3.20 Delphi Research Module 3: Dissemination and Sustainability

After analysing and verifying the data from the Delphi Method conclusions were drawn and recommendations put forward for dissemination and acceptance. Dissemination can be defined as a planned active process that provides 'analytical lenses' through which operational research can be evaluated. It is an opportunity to engage a wider audience, receive direct feedback and access new ideas especially from peers, who have knowledge of my professional practice, and could review and validate my findings (Elsey, 2006). Dissemination activities makes it possible to create a community of professional EAA/T practitioners by embracing a wider audience of peer practitioners with correlative talents committed to a common purpose, and specific goals. Dissemination policy is the expression of research (Serrat, 2005) that causes action (Harmsworth and Turpin, 2000) and changes when practitioners adopt ideas offered by my project.

The core objective of dissemination is 'utilisation' (Granger and White, 2001). Positive utilisation of the research outcomes is necessary if they are to be used as recommendations for a future professional curriculum. However, some may take a different view and will use the findings to reject utilisation (Granger and White, 2001).

Dissemination offers an opportunity to work together with peers and EAA/T stakeholders so that even more people become aware and embedded in the project. 'Stakeholders' are people, groups, organisations, etc., who are affected by the dissemination of the research. They are the potential users of the research findings, the **target audience or group** (Harmsworth and Turpin, 2000). Peer reviews are one key way to guarantee content quality. Sometimes peer reviewing, or the 'community talking to itself', can work against the new findings and therefore jeopardise any change or inventiveness (Elsey, 2006, pp. 79-80). Disseminating the research findings by peer and user involvement will not only be beneficial but also balance the tension between change and what is the current reality (Costley et al., 2010).

3.21 Delphi Research Method: Ethical Issues

The reason for this research has been to investigate the current Israeli EAA/T curriculum-identifying existing gaps if they exist and making suggestions for a future curriculum. Before dissemination it was my responsibility to let colleagues know how I am going to 'spread the word', which was another opportunity to further interface with colleagues and practitioners thus incorporating them into the project (Elliot et al., 2003).

The Delphi Method, through collective thought, discussion and logical thinking could reveal not only the present situation but also make recommendations for the future. To achieve this knowledge, the Delphi Method, the chosen methodology, must be

> *…designed and reviewed and undertaken with integrity and quality* (Ross, Loup, Nelson, Botkin, Kost, and Gehlert, 2010, p. 1).

The guiding principles of the technique was to ensure a systematic regard for the rights and interests of all those participating in the enquiry. No harm, in the widest sense, must be done or permitted, and the research must serve the interests and well-being of others (University of Derby Research Ethics Policy and Code of Practice, 2011). This research design and method will be undertaken after careful consideration of its ethical implications (University of Derby Research Ethics Policy and Code of Practice, 2011) and will observe rules and standards rigorously; otherwise the research would not be trustworthy and relied upon by others (Liamputtong, 2011). It would have no practical consequences without sound information, a good design and sound methodology and presumptions (Stahl, 2008). Equally the Delphi Method could only be ethically sound if I, as the researcher, understand that ethics go beyond the concerns of research design and methodologies and that they are an integral part of the substructure of the research. For instance, research participants and my supervisor must be fully informed about the purpose of the research, the method used and intended possible use upon completion. It must be clear what is required for them to participate and what are the risks, if any, if they become involved in the project. This is a critical part of the Delphi process, from inception to interpretation as well as being part of the publishing of findings. There was consideration of **all ethical implications, physiological, psychological, social, political, religious, environmental, economic, cultural of the research for participants,** (University of Derby Research Ethics Policy and Code of Practice, 2011). It is critical to

ensure that I, as the researcher, understood the ethical dilemmas that will confront me daily and that this research is guided by *"ethical principles beyond informed consent"* design and method (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006, p. 82). As the Delphi enquiry emerged, balanced decisions had to be made between risk and benefits. The balance must lean towards the side of benefit (Ramcharan and Cutliffe, 2001), otherwise the research would have been reduced to having negative ethical implications that could have damaging effects on participants and the whole investigation (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006). The Delphi Method particularly needs protective mechanisms in place to protect its small number of expert participants who are asked to participate for three iterations of the Delphi, and are expected to have an in depth understanding of the issues presented. The Delphi Method relies on the participants providing rich informational accounts of their experiences (Liamputtong, 2011). As the Delphi Method is a consensus-seeking enquiry it was necessary to inform participants about the nature and outcomes of the research and that they were free to decide whether to participate or not, and if to withdraw from participation when they feel uncomfortable with their participation (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006).

Following these principles each participant received an informed consent letter that safeguards privacy, and assures confidentiality and anonymity (Ramcharan and Cutcliffe, 2001; Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006).

> *Informed consent…safeguard participants from any mental or physical harm that may be caused by their participation* (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006, p. 64).

From the beginning, participants had the opportunity to understand why they were being invited to participate, and decide if they were willing to sign a voluntary consent letter without being under duress. They were given the right to withdraw from the research at any time (Löfman, Pelkonen and Pietilä, 2004). When one of the participating experts left the Delphi, I found myself examining my actions to see whether I was the cause of his decision to leave. As I continued this self-examination process, I made sure not to use any coercion to make the participant remain in the project. During the research participants must not experience any stress, and all steps must be taken to relax him or her and reduce any feelings of intrusion (Ross, Loup, Nelson, Botkin, Kost and Gehlert, 2010). Participants and the researcher should have an equal relationship during the time of the

research (Löfman, Pelkonen and Pietilä, 2004). As the researcher, I must respect and show common courtesy to all participants by responding promptly to their needs for guidance and feedback during all interactions. I was aware that giving incentives to participants can be detrimental to the participant, as well as create biases in the research and decided against using any form of incentives (BERA: British Educational Research Association, 2011.

The Delphi, as a qualitative research, is open to areas of deregulation while collecting evidence that could have been detrimental to the participant and the quality of the enquiry. Participants would have been informed immediately of any predictable detriment arising from the process or findings of the research (BERA: British Educational Research Association, 2011). There must be a mechanism to detoxify and remove unwanted data that could be detrimental to the participant and can occur through the multiple rounds of the Delphi Method (National Bioethics Advisory Commission, 2001). In this research, I encountered no such threats to participant wellbeing.

The Delphi Method requires anonymity and confidentiality as part of its process. If participants decided to go public with their information and did not wish to remain anonymous, does the researcher have the right to impose confidentiality? Are human subject committees patronising and disempowering if they turn down those respondents who wish to reveal their identities? Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) and Stahl (2008) argued that to exploit, dominate, oppress and disempower people are all misuses of research, which is critical and ethical in nature and is motivated by intention to change social realities (Stahl, 2008). Stahl (2008) suggests that an aim of the research is to empower and liberate and emancipate the individual and their potential.

As an insider researcher, there were principles of 'trust and accountability' to which I must adhere, if my colleagues were going to trust what I am doing in my workplace the therapeutic riding centre. I must discuss with them the research project and assure them that their input will remain anonymous and confidential. When my research started, I asked for written consent that the research could take place (Appendix 4.iii). When I interviewed colleagues, I did so fully aware that the research can represent a challenge to their value system and the professionalism of our workplace. I never forgot the powerful implications of researching the EAA/T curriculum as a practitioner amongst practitioners at work and in the EAA/T community.

Bell and Nutt (2012) wrote about the dilemmas facing practitioner researchers. For instance, my professional role and code of practice as an educator of prospective EAA/T student practitioners can be in conflict with my role as a researcher, when my students participate in the research enquiry. Equally my role as a researcher and EAA/T practitioner could have been in conflict with my **teacher colleagues** who might disagree or find the process and the findings threatening. I must treat my **teacher colleagues** with respect by working with them cooperatively. I must discuss with them the research project to assure them that their input will remain anonymous and confidential (Bell and Nutt, in Mauthner, et. al., 2012).

I was aware that this was not always going to be easy, especially when I brought my own emotional motivations, likes and dislikes to the research project. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) would suggest that one should

> *always keep this in mind and always consider personal ethical options* (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006, p. 77).

This study was conducted in accordance to the principles of the BERA: British Education Research Association, (2011). It will comply with the data collection and storage requirements set down in the Data Protection Act 1998 (BERA: British Education Research Association, 2011). Participants have the right to know why their information is being stored, who is going to see it, and what is it going to be used for in the future. As a researcher, I must have participants' permission to disclose information. Permission for disclosure may be given verbally, or in writing. At the end of the research, the participants will be debriefed and copies of the findings of this research will be presented to each participant (BERA: British Education Research Association, 2011).

Both as a researcher and a professional, I have a responsibility to safeguard the EAA/T community from adverse outcomes of the investigation. Following the publication, dissemination and diffusion of the informed recommendations for a future curriculum, employers and stakeholders may show some dissatisfaction that may cause them to consider terminating current practitioners who they may feel are no longer sufficiently qualified. To prevent these adversities, practitioners, employers, and all stakeholders must be reassured that any recommendations for a future curriculum seek to bring new tools to

current practice. These tools will surface from current practice and contribute to the improvement of practice (Wilson and Cheetham, 2008).

Using the Delphi Method will require tact and sensitivity towards the panel of experts' time commitments. This is an important consideration needed to create an effective relationship with them (Boulkedid et al., 2011; Partridge et al., 2005).

Overall, I am accountable not only to the users, those involved in the research, but to the public at large who requires transparency of all material published in industry journals. I am also accountable to those who participate in my research, and therefore must recognise their investment and treat them with dignity (McLaughlin, 2012). I am politically accountable to my national and international EAA/T associations (Partridge et al., 2005) as well as to my University Review Board that has given me the opportunity to conduct research and expects me to be fiscally responsible, honest and reliable, while producing an authentic research project that is both original, and engages in divergent thinking, making my project innovative and motivating (Krishna and Thrayil, 2005).

Once I have started this assignment, I must fulfil my contractual promise made at the beginning of my programme. On the occasions when my enquiry and dissemination go beyond my own expertise, requiring assistance from my supervisors, I will be accountable to them as well. I cannot violate research regulations, misrepresent and or report inaccurately recorded data, misread or falsify conclusions and observations, or commit intentional negligence by not reporting all relevant observations.

> *Accounts should exhibit interpretive sufficiency* (Christians in Denzin and Lincoln, p. 902).

Sloppy, insufficient and selective data is poor science (Adler, in Huberman and Miles, 1994). It is a violation not to report relevant observations or appropriately confirm outliers that deviate markedly from the other observations, as it is a failure not to report negative results. My data and research must be available to external agreeable scrutiny. Authorship must contain names of everyone that has contributed to the research. All of these ethical values and practices must be honoured and carried out in the spirit of the BERA (British Education Research Association, 2011) ethical guidelines for education research and in the spirit of the principles of the research ethics policy and code of practice (University of Derby, Research Ethics Policy and Code of Practice, 2011).

3.22 Chapter Summary

EAA/T is not an exact science and results were not easily quantifiable, therefore it was difficult to construct a statistical model that could be

> *explained, classified, counted, and constructed in an attempt to explain what is observed* (O'Neil, 2007, p. 1).

The Delphi paradigm provided the frame for the analysis and identification of some of the long-term and current issues translating the new knowledge into informed judgments (Linstone and Turoff, 2002, p. 77) that could become recommendations for a new future curriculum.

I came to this research with some preconceived notions, based on working in EAA/T for three decades. The Delphi Method facilitated my search for acceptable solutions to my epistemological questions. The study increased my awareness of current attitudes among the EAA/T community as well as making me more aware of my own limitations in my approach to EAA/T. I became aware of the danger of potentially introducing my own biases into the study; therefore, I paid close attention to both moral and ethical codes of research and relationships, because they were central to the efficacy of the study. In totality, to carry out an enquiry of this magnitude without prior experience is a monumental challenge.

The next chapter reports the Delphi Method research, data analysis and findings.

Chapter Four

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter described and explained the research methodology. In this chapter the data analysis and findings were presented. Two fundamental goals drove the data collection and analysis, which were, to know, ‘‘Where are we now’’? Then recognise ways to improve the curriculum, which would answer another core question, ‘‘Where would we like to be’’? (p. 6).

This chapter began by reviewing eight component questions that were asked at focus groups (FG) and in interviews (IN). It continued by reporting the key findings, which have come from thematising the vast amount of analysed data from the FG and IN, the student questionnaire (SQ) and the Delphi expert survey (DE). The chapter concludes with a summation of the findings.

During the research, it became clear that many EAA/T practitioners are dissatisfied with the current state of EAA/T training. The floodgates were opened. Discussions were passionate as participants shared their visions of how to change and qualitatively improve the training of EAA/T practitioners. **These documented visions are intended to provide future EAA/T curriculum builders with important foresight and information.**

4.2 Delphi Method: Research Key Findings

The key findings were actualised through a process of categorising and thematising participants’ responses and produced key areas where change was to be considered (See Figure 4.1, p. 116). These key areas were further sub divided into sub areas revealing even more contributing factors that could be classified as gaps (Figure 4.1, p. 116).

Figure 4.1 below, represents the key findings. Areas of the curriculum where gaps were prevalent emerged. Inside each distinct area there were subcategories, which represented parts of key areas.

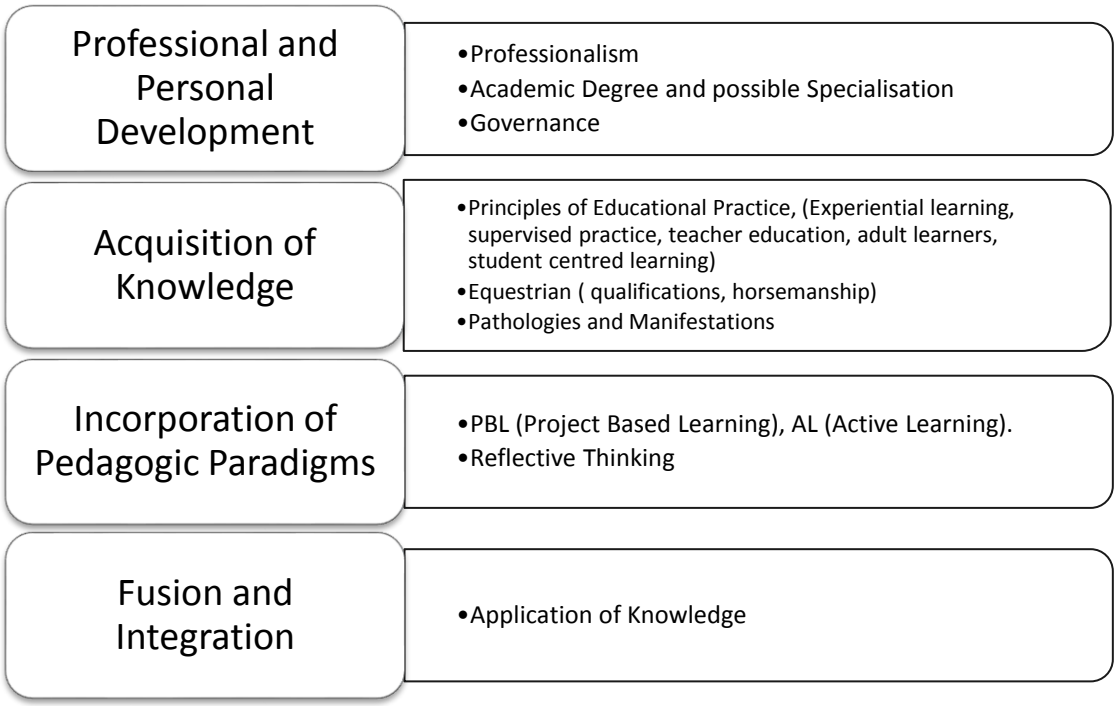

Figure 4.1: Four Key Curriculum Gaps Areas

4.3 Key Findings: Delphi Survey and Collected Insights

Curriculum gaps were found in areas of professional and personal development, acquisition of knowledge, incorporation of pedagogic paradigms, fusion and integration. Collective consensus emerged that the bar for EAA/T training should be raised. Specifically, it was suggested that EAA/T training should entertain academic possibilities, careers and changes in EAA/T educator and educational practice (Figure 4.1, p. 116). Fourteen Delphi Method (Delphi) responders recognised the need for change, when they suggested a new future curriculum should provide more in-depth content, best educational practices, and critical equestrian skills. With a desire for uniformity some proposed EAA/T should have national and/or international governing bodies that could streamline standards. Collectively Delphi experts (DE), focus groups responders (FG) interviewees (IN) and prospective EAA/T practitioners (students' questionnaire, SQ) indicated the need to create a career path and opportunities for secondary and post-secondary accreditation of expertise were needed (Appendix 2.iv). The tabulated responses showed the close relationship between the data collected with FG, IN, DE, and SQ thus confirming real issues in the curriculum. Many of the actual quotes made by

responders can be found in Appendix 1.i - Appendix 1.xi, and the eight components thematised responses are found on Table 4.1a-4.4b, pp. 122-125.

4.4 Delphi Research Module 1: Analysis of Key Findings - Insights, Focus Groups (FG) and Interviewees (IN)

4.4.1 Eight Component Questions

Focus group (FG) participants and interviewees (IN) were asked eight questions, which constituted the breakdown of the overarching central research question. The primary objectives of the questions were to elicit as much information from stakeholder audiences that could be used to build the initial Delphi questionnaire (QR1). Questions were designed to have multi layers and be interdependent. The questions came from my personal knowledge working as an EAA/T educator and practitioner, and previously unknown help from empirical data found in the literature review (Blair and Barton, 2013).

Using pre-structured questions could have created tensions and a sense of incompatibility with the constructive framework of the research. Pre-structured questions could restrict dialogue, impacting a developing theory. In addition, they could have affected my relationship, as the researcher, with participants in the focus groups and interviewees. To avoid this issue, the questions were designed to be sufficiently open-ended in order to encourage responders to answer in any way they wished. The questions were designed to be conversation starters that defined the sense of purpose. The pre-structured questions were not built in any sequential order or given equal value. They were not built incrementally upon previous questions, meaning that they were not laid out as a series of questions on a fixed scale. They were chosen to be of interest to the participants and did not represent a line of enquiry that only interested me (Lowe, 2005).

The pre-set questions were used to start a rich narrative that could provide data that could empower the research. The questions helped me, as the researcher, to think beyond the responses, pay attention to general chatter and "*language that sits between and beyond words"* (Lowe 2005, p. 2), the emotional and non-verbal dialogue during the sessions.

When questions were answered, resonance was noted, (Question 1, p. 118). When the

questions introduced

> *themes of "striking moments" it situated a pre-structured method within alternative conceptual and metaphorical frames* (Lowe, 2005, p. 3).

The pre-structured questions contributed to the constructive framework's creativity by connecting me to participants in the groups and interviews. There structure allowed me to trust my intuition, while increasing my ability to observe, and expand crucial moments in the meetings. Lowe (2005) suggests that knowing how to use and build on to the pre-structured question ranges

> *from a broader re-thinking of social constructionism, to specific forms of reflection and changes of metaphor (Lowe 2005, p. 11).*

Lowe (2005) maintained that

> *…structured questions should be thought of as a conversational process rather than "thing like" sets of questions. He is convinced that they do not compromise the theoretical foundations of narrative styles, but may assist the realisation in a more collaborative and creative practice (Lowe, 2005, p.4).*

The questions and the replies were as follows:

1. Do EAA/T curricula sufficiently train professionals to meet client needs?

Participants gave a resounding **No answer** to the question. This stimulated powerful discussion about such areas that needed more coverage in the EAA/T curriculum such as: professionalism, knowledge, academia, governance and research, which included the following points:

- Equestrianism- Bar too low.
- Lack of knowledge of human /horse relationships.
- Poor profiling of EAA/T candidates.
- Not professional enough.
- Lack of critical thinking skills.
- Lack of practice.

2. ***Can you identify gaps in the current curriculum?***

This question stimulated furthered discussion about content of the curriculum, its application and the practical experience offered students during training. Responders quickly suggested many gaps in current curricula and revealed obstacles to change.

- As adults, they felt their personal needs ignored.
- EAA/T curricula were not connected to real-life issues.
- The gap between theory and practice needs closing.
- Knowledge of pathologies and their manifestations.
- Lack of experienced educators.
- Lack of supervised practice- more practice.
- Postgraduate – clinics, workshops are needed for CPD.
- Research and development.
- Involvement of professional organisations.

3. ***Are EAA/T curricula sufficiently recognised and integrated with other educational and medical professions in a way that enables EAA/T practitioners to provide a holistic approach?***

The third question sought information about the educational quality of the curriculum and the end product. It drew mixed responses, ranging from *pro* to *against* the use of specialist teaching. The question raised concerns about the application of theory for best practice.

- EAA/T isolated and insulated.
- EAA/T in Germany had become over specialised, weakening skills and therapeutic effects.
- Curriculum should create an integrated picture.

4. ***Should EAA/T curricula incorporate critical educational theories as well as proven practical paradigms from healthcare and education, PBL (Project-based Learning), AL (Active Learning), WBL (Work-based Learning)?***

The fourth question produced short but crucial responses. Most responders were conscious that curricula must encourage curiosity, creativity, critical thinking and

reflection. Responders considered these skills to be all-important qualities for best practice. However, it also drew responses that suggested there was a:

- Lack of understanding – therapeutic tools.
- Some components of the curriculum irrelevant.

5. ***How can EAA/T curricula engage employers and other stakeholders to assess their true needs for consideration into the curricula?***

The fifth question delivered open-ended answers. These answers ranged from a shift in the status quo, for example, from volunteerism to professionalism, from no student profiling to defined admission policies to more structural issues such as the lack of financial incentives. This included:

- Not enough communication with all stakeholders.
- Poor understanding of stakeholder needs.
- The need for a mechanism for an ongoing dialogue.

6. ***How can we become more sensitive to cross-cultural differences?***

This question appeared to lose relevancy after the third FG. Often responses suggested this was not an issue. However, FG2 raised the issue of *boss culture*. Students who were already specialists found it difficult to become passive followers when receiving instruction during EAA/T training.

7. ***Does the course include the most appropriate topics?***

This question produced a list of basic topics, which responders considered important and which they felt needed improving if the bar was to be raised for EAA/T. Responders indicated that the gaps that concerned them were present equestrianism, professionalism, governance, principles of practice, pathologies and manifestations, reflective and critical thinking skills and knowledge application. They suggested these gaps should be closed if future best practice is to be achieved. Responders suggested the following:

- Raising the level of equestrianism was the most critical of the gaps.
- Equestrianism should include equestrian skills and knowledge as well as knowledge of building the human- horse bond.

- Any new future curriculum should cover basic topics related to EAA/T practice.
- Prospective EAA/T practitioners (PEPs) should receive training in therapeutic skills.
- Theory must be linked to practice.

8. To what extent should the student study each topic?

This question generated a huge variation in responses, especially in relation to hours of supervised practice. The number of hours for supervised practice varied from twenty-five hours to five hundred hours. Some suggested it was quality of practice that counted and not quantity. Those who went for many hours of practice believed it would enhance professional confidence. Regardless of the variations, supervised practice was regarded crucial to any future curriculum.

When the discussion came to pathologies and manifestations of pathologies responders suggested the amount of time given to the topics would depend on the student's background knowledge. For instance, if they came from a paramedical background they would require less training in pathologies and their manifestations. Responders suggested students should know the meaning of the common pathologies they may encounter as well as understand the material provided by therapists that they might encounter during intake or during the course of the EAA/T programme. However, manifestations were rated above pathologies, as they holistically represent all the aspects of the disability or difficulty. In addition, many responders saw the value of academia, and a first degree. They suggested that there should be continuing professional development (CPD) via post graduate workshops and clinics.

From FG and IN initial responses the following **descriptive theme** emerged (pp. 122 - 125). Tables' 4.1a- 4.4b represent the views of FG or IN participants who were either for or against some changes in various topics. The amount of times the topic was implied or mentioned gave a + or - score finally represented in a summative number.

Table 4.1a: Professional and Personal Development (FG)

Key Finding Professional Validation and Personal Development	Professionalism		Academic Degree		Specialisation		Governance		Research	
	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
FG1	22		0		6		20		0	
FG2	21	2	3		19		14		2	
FG3	23		6		14		17		5	
FG4	17		0		10		2	1	3	
FG5	25		5		10		5		20	
FG6	18	1	2		1		3		0	
FG7	26	1	6		9		4	4	0	

The data from the seven focus groups shows that participants considered professionalism to be the most important theme closely followed by specialisation and governance. FG5 with a high percentage of experts in the field emphasised the importance of research.

Table 4.1b: Professional and Personal Development (IN)

Key Finding Professional Validation and Personal Development	Professionalism		Academic Degree		Specialisation		Governance		Research	
	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
IN1	40		14		17		21		8	1
IN2	30	1	18	1	15		15		6	
IN3	10		10		13		12		1	
IN4	20		9		10		5	1	2	1
IN5	11		2		1	7	3		2	

Table 4.1b shows that the data from the five interviews strongly endorsed the themes that emerged during the focus groups. An additional theme, that of ‘Academic Degree’ gained substantial strength and must be considered.

Table 4.2a: Key Findings – Acquisition of Knowledge (FG)

	Principles of Educational Knowledge						Equestrian Qualifications Horsemanship		Pathologies & Manifestations	
	Educator Training		Adult Learners/ Student-Centred		Experiential Learning					
	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-
FG1	14		16		30		20		15	
FG2	10		10		26		20		15	
FG3	14		10		20		35		22	
FG4	6		17		17		18		11	
FG5	16		13		10		11		7	
FG6	6		4		26		17		15	
FG7	22		17		20		11		21	

Table 4.2a shows that when asked to consider how knowledge is formed during the EAA/T training programme, focus groups participants endorsed experiential learning and stressed the need to have the learning experience student-centred. Focus group participants indicated the need to have better educators in the EAA/T programme and a need to emphasis pathologies and their manifestation during the theoretical part of the programme and horsemanship during the practical part of the programme.

Table 4.2b: Key Findings – Acquisition of Knowledge (IN)

	Principles of Educational Knowledge						Equestrian Qualifications Horsemanship		Pathologies & Manifestations	
	Educator Training		Adult Learners/ Student Centred		Experiential Learning					
	+		-				+	-	+	-
IN1	27		20		12		43		14	
IN2	22		20		10		31		14	
IN3	18		12		19		35		10	
IN4	26		14		14		40		10	
IN5	1		12		10		27		5	

Table 4.2b shows that interviewees showed similar concerns. When considering the principles of education most apprpriate for EAA/T training they chose experiential

learning and student-centred andragogial principles. The interviewees also indicated that pathologies and their manifestations were areas that need more attention from EAA/T training instructors.

Table 4.3a: Incorporation of Pedagogic Programmes (FG)

Key finding Incorporation of Pedagogic Paradigms	Problem Based Learning (PBL)		Active Learning (AL) Role Play, Case study Debate/Feedback		Critical Thinking Reflective Learning	
	+	-	+	-	+	-
FG1	7		3		14	
FG2	1		6		11	
FG3	1		11		12	
FG4	2		2		3	
FG5	2		2		2	
FG6	2		1		9	
FG7	1		2		10	

Table 4.3a shows the answers of focus group participants who were asked to consider the pedagogical aspects of EAA/T training. Although focus group participants indicated a need to adopt PBL and AL pedagogical techniques in their remarks it was clear they were not fully conversant with the terms. It was much easier to indicate the importance of teaching critical thinking skills and the practice of reflection.

Table 4.3b: Incorporation of Pedagogic Programmes (IN)

Key Finding Incorporation of Pedagogic Paradigms	Problem Based Learning (PBL)		Active Learning (AL) Role Play, Case Study, Debate/ Feedback		Critical Thinking Reflective Learning	
	+	-	+	-	+	-
IN1	2		2		12	1
IN2	1		7		6	
IN3	1		6		11	
IN4	0		6		15	
IN5	8		1		4	

Table 4.3b shows the answers of interviewees asked about the pedagogical aspects of their EAA/T training. Interviewees indicated a need to incorporate PBL and AL teaching methods and a need to teach critical thinking skills as well as the practice of reflection.

Table 4.4a: Fusion and Integration (FG)

Key Finding Fusion & Integration	Theory ↓ Practice		IST Workshops/ Clinics		Specialist Knowledge E.g. Physiotherapist/Occupational Therapist/ Speech Language Pathologist	
	+	-	+	-	+	-
FG1	16		3		11	
FG2	20		2		2	6
FG3	29		7		12	
FG4	13		0		1	
FG5	2		2		11	
FG6	21		2		10	3
FG7	19		6		11	

Table 4.4a shows that focus group participants agreed that the EAA/T curriculum needs to integrate the teaching of theory and the practice elements to create a complete 'whole'. Participants suggested that EAA/T curriculum needs to concern itself with the continuing professional development (CPD) of EAA/T programme graduates and with the concepts of specialisation and collaboration with specialists.

Table 4.4b: Fusion and Integration (IN)

Key Finding: Fusion & Integration	Theory ↓ Practice		In Service Training Workshops/ Clinics		Specialist Knowledge E.g. Physiotherapist/Occupational Therapist/ Speech Language Pathologist / Advanced Riding Instructor	
	+	-	+	-	+	-
IN1	15		9		19	1
IN2	19		0		6	
IN3	20		8		6	
IN4	16		1		20	
IN5	14		2		4	7

Table 4.4b shows that interviewees felt that the EAA/T curriculum needs to integrate theoretical units with units concened with the practice of EAA/T. Further more interviewees felt that an effective EAA/T curriculum must address the need for future professional development (CPD) and specialisation. IN5 was concerned how and when to use secialists in the arena.

Figure 4.2 below, represents a **sequence of evidence,** data gathering and analysis, starting from the central research question, through the thematisation of FG and IN data. This process provided **Key Findings and Areas** recommended for change.

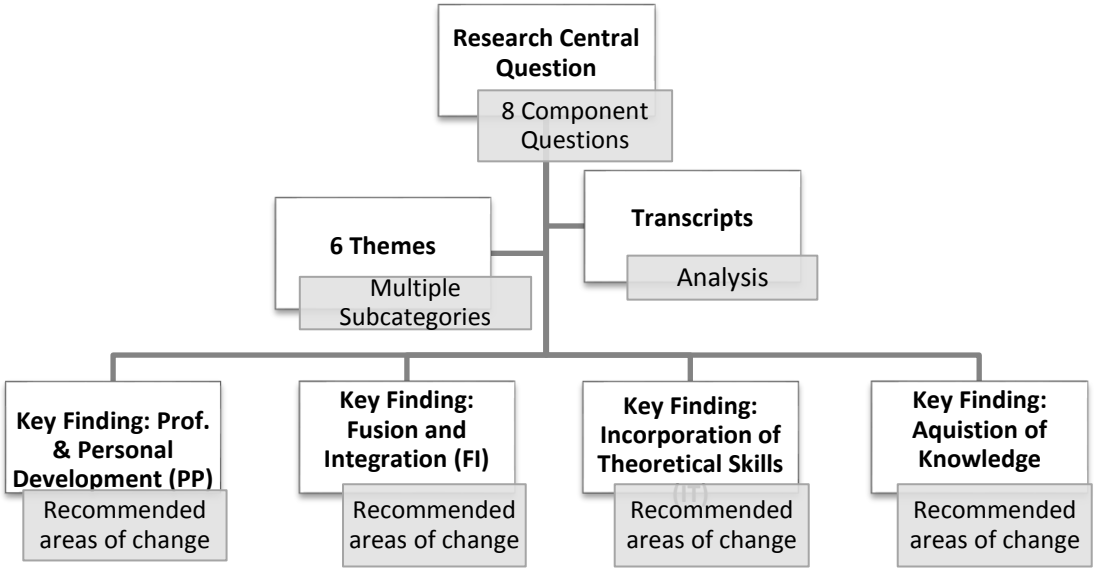

Figure 4.2: Sequence of Gathering Evidence

4.5 Analysing Data: Chain of Evidence - Insights, FG and IN

4.5.1 FG and IN Transcripts

To reach the theme descriptive a chain of evidence began by initially transcribing verbatim the audio taped interviews and focus groups and then analysing them. Taking a denaturalised approach, I conceptualised what lay behind the spoken and written word, recording information using Standard English (Appendix 1.xiv, 5.i, 6.i, and 7.i). The transcripts were read and analysed in three ways:

a. The number of times a sentiment was implied.
b. Whether it **attracted** or **detracted** from curriculum change (**Attract** implying positive responses that included the desire for change. **Detract** implied obstacles to change or the belief that it was unnecessary to make changes).
c. The depth of feeling that arose from statements.

Analysing the data several times revealed common matrixes, which had embedded key themes. I scrutinised the text multiple times to make sure I had not injected my thoughts into implied statements, or reduced factual soundness (Burman, and Parker, 1993; Brown, 2010). I was concerned that I could select one finding over another, which could introduce research errors (Pannucci and Wilkins, 2010) and so great care was taken not to forget the original aim of reaching collective consensus or internal validity brought about by one finding being associated with another (Šimundić, 2013).

It is noteworthy to say that verbatim quotes were used to qualify the findings where respondents' perceptions and statements did not represent actual Academic or National Organisation policy.

4.5.2 FG and IN: Starting Lists

Transcript data was placed in a starting list, which was adapted from an original design by Miles and Huberman (1994). The starting list was a critical first step in documenting FG and IN experiences and spontaneity at that moment in time, as well as characteristics and habits, beliefs and interactions with colleagues (Stacey, 2001). Counting the number of times participants' responses implied an attract or detract result added a level of order to the analysis and provided opposing points of view that were important and later discussed and evaluated (p. 129). The starting lists helped me to conceptualise the gathered field data and provided a comprehensive operational code structure promoting quality in subsequent analyses (Bradley, Curry and Devers, 2007; Appendix 1, xii-xiv, including original colour coded transcript).

4.5.3 FG: Observations During the Retrieval Process

Seven focus groups took place between 2010 and 2011 containing between 6-12 participants each. The questions were sent in English in advance to the Taiwan, and Hong Kong FG organisers for them to understand the English and the sometimes-complex pronunciation and meaning of words. Occasionally the question order was changed, or linked together to infer more meaning. Regardless of presentational adaptations in diverse global locations, the **common fund of experience and similarity in work culture** resulted in obtaining similar responses in each location (Kidd and Parshall, 2000).

Often during meetings, participants would get involved in local dynamics by raising more complex motives for action or lack of action. For example, FG2 participants emphasised equestrian skills as so many of the local practitioners were specialists who lacked equestrian skills. FG5 and FG4 participants polarised their responses towards coaching, a method they were both using. Listening to some participants' responses, there was a real sense of urgency for curriculum change (Quote: FG5 p. 128). Others predicted curriculum change was unattainable because they felt they were powerless. Both IN and FG responders agreed that the lack of money in the industry worked against any possibility of professionalising the curriculum (Appendix 1.i).

Quote:FG5
'We have pussy footed around long enough.'

4.5.4 IN: Observations During the Retrieval Process

Interviews took place between 2011 and 2012 and included five global interviews from four countries. The interviews carried out in English were either face to face or through Skype and were audio taped. During IN conversations, it was noticeable how interviewees reflected upon themselves in relation to the research central topic. Sometimes questions were answered from personal past experiences and environments, mirroring behaviours and attitudes. It was evident that some focus group participants and interviewees had created their own methods to ensure best practice in their domain (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003). For instance, one FG3 responder had found a way to provide students with hundreds of practical hours (FG3, in Appendix 5.i).

A common thread within IN responses was recognition that the curriculum bar was currently too low for certification. However, there was a sense of disheartenment, as no one envisaged the possibility of change and often injected the idea that EAA/T is on a downhill slide (FGb, INd, DEb, in Appendix 1.iii; Quote IN2, p. 129).

Quote:IN2

I truly believed that we have done ourselves a dis-service. ---Your timing, I truly think, is incredible to bring up this topic. We recognise the need for certification, with high standards. I am not sure how to get us to this point.

Table 4.5: Insights Participants and Countries

Multiple Insights	Number of Insights	Number of Participants	Countries
Focus Groups	7	68	6
Interviews	5	5	4
Student Questionnaires	36	36	1
Experts	14	14	4

Table 4.5 provided a summary of insights and the number of participants by research tool.

4.6 Insights: Focus Groups (FG) and Interviews (IN) - Themes

Six descriptive categories and overriding themes arose from eight key questions, the starting lists and my theoretical knowledge of the research (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). This included a theme relating to obstacles to curriculum building (OC). The themes linked the constructs found in the transcripts and even some that perhaps should have been found in the transcripts, but were omitted (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). The themes embraced multiple categories in one topic, which were later aggregated into four key findings (p. 116).

Counting the number of times group's responses addressed the research question, produced some variations, which were significant if one relates the scores to the practitioner's function and experience. FGs 2, 6 and 7 were mainly made up of young practitioners, with a maximum of three years of experience. FG5 had a high percentage of CEO's with a different experience in the field. All INs were experienced educators with seven plus years of experience. The differences impacted topics like, educator training, adult learners, pedagogic paradigms and specialisation. For instance, IN5 produced the highest negative score for specialisation (Table 4.4b, p. 125). Interviewee

IN5 who had a vast experience of arena teaching was concerned that specialisation could come too early in a curriculum before the basics were established. This valid response was further discussed and evaluated (Appendix 1.ii). FG2 participants who were young practitioners, many with specialties in their own right, were concerned that fusion and integration could dilute horsemanship knowledge and equestrianism (p. 123).

Table 4.6: Number of Participants (FG) and (IN)

Number of Focus Groups and Interviews	Focus Groups (FG)	Number of Participants (N=)	Interviewees (IN1)
1	Focus Group 1: (FG1)	N=12	Interviewee 1: (IN1)
2	Focus Group 2: (FG2)	N=8	Interviewee 2: (IN2)
3	Focus Group 3: (FG3)	N=12	Interviewee 3: (IN3)
4	Focus Group 4: (FG4)	N=4	Interviewee 4: (IN4)
5	Focus Group 5: (FG5)	N=12	Interviewee 5: (IN5)
6	Focus Group 6: (FG6)	N=8	
7	Focus Group 7: (FG7)	N=12	

4.7 Analysis of Key Findings: FG and IN: Professional Validation/ Personal Development

Generally, FG and IN participants were seeking a **professional identity**. It was their concern that EAA/T became a **profession in its own right**. They recognised that gaps existed in the training curricula, which in their own eyes diminished their professional status and personal validity as therapists. They were convinced that the curriculum bar was slipping, and national organisations and academia were not addressing the relevant issues. As suggested by responders EAA/T operators were far more concerned with the number of enrolling students than with the quality of graduating EAA/T students (Profile, OC-M, in Appendix 1.i). FG6 and FG7 responses implied that colleges often waved prerequisites for course admission to maintain a high number of participants for financial gain. Responders were concerned that the lack of national standards allowed organisations to have individual admission policies preventing an understandable practitioner profile. Most FG and IN responders generally felt that any future EAA/T curriculum should be a vehicle for professional development, greater stakeholder

endorsement, and provided research opportunities (Appendix 1.ii). FG 3 and IN1, 2, 3 and 5 responders emphasised the importance of EAA/T job skills and skill recognition (FGa, FGe, INa, INf, in Appendix 1.ii). Some FG3 and 7 and IN1, 2,3 responders wanted a protracted training programme to provide advanced equestrian skills, additional EAA/T skills and information. Participants specifically requested that the curriculum address the skills necessary for managing a sustained practice and the opportunity to make a career out of EAA/T (FNa, FNb, in Appendix 1.i, Appendix 1.vii, and Appendix 1.ix). A small number of FG responders and all IN participants acknowledged that any future curriculum should provide a university first degree alongside various specialisations (FNc, in Appendix 1.iv). Two responders (IN1 and FG3) were adamant that it should be up to universities to determine the elements of EAA/T education, and not national organisations or any other peripheral body. FG3 proposed that

> *there are people in this country that feel that charitable organisations should not really be driving education. That should be up to the colleges or the universities; but that charitable organisations can provide materials, training sessions but the concept of education should not be restricted to smaller organisations, if Xx is about certifying, let the education develop in colleges* (FG3, in Appendix 5.i).

Several FG and IN responders were concerned that few managerial positions were available for highly qualified practitioners, and employer attitudes about salaries prevent professional and personal development opportunities (Prof. OC, in Appendix 1.i).

Contrary to those who desired an academic degree and professionalism, two responders in FG5 claimed that therapeutic practice belonged to specialists, leaving practitioners to focus on horse handling. Some believed that a practitioner's role should remain voluntary to match supply with demand. IN4 and IN3 revoked this viewpoint, suggesting that specialists were only concerned with their speciality, which often weakened the holistic value of EAA/T and led to fractionalisation. Most FG and IN responders were searching for a way to lift their occupation from its existing low status towards a higher professional status (FGd, FGf, in Appendix 1.v).

There were mixed responses when asked who should govern EAA/T. Currently qualifications were in the hands of private non-academic colleges and national

organisations that provided recognition to the institutions licensed to provide EAA/T training (Appendix 1.v). The few academic institutions that provide a first degree are not assuming leadership in the field and the qualifications they provide are not aligned with the field requirements. Many IN and FG responders were concerned that national organisations were not ready for a shift in attitude (Appendix 1.xii).

FG5 argued that it was crucial for EAA/T students and practitioners to participate in evidence–based research. The IN4 interviewee suggested that research should not be promoted above good daily practice. Generally, EAA/T practitioners were considered capable of participating in research programmes, if current curricula provided prospective EAA/T practitioners with research and development skills.

4.7.1 FG and IN: Acquisition of Knowledge

These key findings were split into three parts:

a. Acquisition of Knowledge / Principles of Educational Practice

Both FG and IN participants implicitly believed that there was a serious gap between theory and experiential practice. FG7 participants expressed passionate concerns that new graduates were being … 'thrown in the deep end and are not given enough therapeutic skills and vision with working with horses' (FG7 in Appendix 6.i,). FG1, 3, 4, 6 and 7 participants wanted practitioners to receive further training during additional hours of student supervised practice (FGa, FGc, in Appendix 1.vii). FG1 participants, the least vocal of the focus groups, amplified students' needs when one responder said, *'we feel like we are left on fire, waiting to be rescued, without the vital support from experts in the field'* (Appendix 1.vii). FG 7 (Appendix 6.i) participants were concerned about the knowledge level of educators, and a concern shared by IN1, IN4, IN5 interviewees who recognised that educators require a high level of qualification in academic studies, and equestrian and teaching skills to educate prospective EAA/T practitioners (INa, FGd, in Appendix 1.viii, and FGa, in Appendix 1.xi). The IN1 interviewee suggested that already some colleges in her country did not accept less that a Masters' degree qualification foe instructors.

Both FG and IN responders vocalised weaknesses in experiential learning, and when the FG participants were asked if students are properly supervised they responded by laughing, as they answered with a big NO (p. 118). Supervised practice was considered as significant as content knowledge, and the best way to foster students' skills (Grant and Pomson, 2003). FG2 and FG7 participants argued that the EAA/T curriculum should provide one-on-one time for each student to work with his supervisor. Such a provision, participants felt, would develop and reinforce quality practice skills and confidence (FGc in Appendix 1.vii). FG3 participants reported that their national organisation was now training mentors, while FG4 and 5 participants reported they had commenced coaching schemes to cope with the problem. Generally, it was believed that PEPs need a prolonged and substantial supervised practice for confidence building and practical experience (p. 125; Appendix 1.vii - Appendix 1.ix).

b. Acquisition of Knowledge/ Equestrianism

All IN interviewees and all sixty-six of FG participants were convinced that poor equestrian skills and teaching ability was a gap damaging the profession (FGc, INa, in Appendix 1.viii). Currently most national organisations and academies accepted a minimum level of equestrian skills as a prerequisite for being accepted to the programme. IN1, 2, 3 and FG6 and 7 participants insisted on advanced equestrian skills as a prerequisite prior to graduation. FG7 participants proposed that equestrian skills be a mandatory pre-requisite prior to enrolment. IN5 and FG3 participants proposed that students need to study human equine interactions the IN4 interviewee was very concerned that the significance of the horse's role in EAA/T is being severely truncated, as the specialists' roles move centre stage. IN1, IN4 and FG3 participants suggested that equestrianism was of paramount importance and did so frequently (p. 123; Appendix 1.viii).

c. Acquisition of Knowledge / Pathologies and Manifestations

FG participants and IN interviewees did not spend much time discussing pathologies and manifestations, but when mentioned most responders implied that more theoretical knowledge was needed. The IN4 interviewee suggested that functional anatomy and physiology must be a meaningful experience, relating knowledge to equestrian treatment techniques (INc, INd, FGd, in Appendix 1.ix). Generally, FGs participants and IN

interviewees implied that a strong base in pathologies and their manifestations could improve treatment plans and EAA/T sessions. IN1 was convinced that knowledge of clients' manifestations was critical to safe and meaningful EAA/T sessions. FG3 and FG6 participants and IN5 and IN1 implied that the knowledge of manifestations could make an EAA/T student more competent in the field. FG7 participants suggested that studying psychology per se, should be integrated with counselling and mental and social manifestations of psychological deficits (FGc, in Appendix 1.ix; Quote IN5, p. 134).

Quote:IN5

They have to understand disability, but more they have to know how the rider is affected by disability and understand what the rider needs at that momen -gradually understanding layer and layer.

4.7.2 FG and IN: Incorporation of Pedagogic Paradigms

A number of FG responders and all IN interviewees recognised that PEPs lacked experiential learning, and supervised practice. Active learning and supervised practice were pedagogic paradigms that most responders were using. Many recognise the need for more opportunities for critical thinking, reflecting and observation, which were deemed pivotal when learning how to leverage human/horse connections as a non- intrusive approach to better health, as well as being crucial for best practice (INa, FGa, in Appendix 1.x; Quote IN5, p. 134).

Quote:IN5

We should use techniques like problem-based learning

I believe in all this, they must be able to see and get conclusions and thinking critically on their way. See the way they are working – reflecting on things – self-awareness.

4.7.3 FG and IN: Fusions and Integration

FG and IN responders regarded the lack of fusion and integration as a gap that lead to graduate insecurities, and poor practice (FGa, FGb, in Appendix 1.xi). However, FG6 and 7 and IN5 participants were concerned that the presence of specialists in the arena could increase EAA/T student insecurities. An FG3 (in Appendix 5.i) responder disagreed and proposed that EAA/T was too insular and needed to move out of its box and tap into local

expertise (Grant and Pomson, 2003). A number of responders considered an in-service training (IST) programme as an extension of the curriculum for graduates, and suggested it could be the much-needed curriculum solution to the fusion and integration (Grant and Pomson, 2003).

4.8 Analysis of Key Findings: Student Questionnaires (SQ)

Examining the curriculum from different angles widened the perspective, reduced biases and made the findings more credible. Thirty-eight male and female students (PEPs) aged 22-50 from two EAA/T training courses in Israel took part in a survey conducted in the years between 2010 and 2012. They answered survey questions on the first and last day of their respective courses. The questionnaire (SQ) was divided into three parts: Student goals and expectations, survey questions and hour (allocated to each topic) analysis (Appendix 2.i, 2.ii, 2.iii and 2.iv). These findings were later cross referenced with the DE survey and the other data collected (Table 4.7, p. 145; Table 4.8, p. 148 and Appendix 1.i -1.xi).

4.8.1 SQ: Goal Analysis

When asked to identify six goals for their EAA/T programme some of the students identified six goals while others mentioned less. They addressed the question of goals in three different ways:

- Some related to the profession in general.
- Some related to the course experience.
- A majority related to the curricula

The goal types that emerged were aggregated into nine goal types with four colour- coded themes (Appendix 2.iv).

4.8.2 SQ: Professional Validation and Personal Development

Goal analysis revealed high expectations, vision and motivation at the beginning of the course. Students hoped to gain new knowledge in all fields and become working

professionals. They wanted a life changing experience learning to care for others. They wanted teachers to understand their needs as adult learners. Their goal expectations indicated that the students were asking for a transformative experience (Goal Expectation A - Course - General - Type 1- Professional Development, in (Appendix 2.iv).

4.8.3 SQ: Acquisition of Knowledge

a. Principles of Educational Practice

It was apparent from the analysis of the questionnaires that students placed a high importance on experiential and authentic practice. Practical skills received the highest score (Figure 4.5, p. 139). Students focused on knowledge acquisition, time and resources, with the desire to make the most of their lives. At the beginning of the course they were looking forward to progress and self-setting goals as a measurement for personal achievements. The students were confident that the goals they had for their participation in the EAA/T programme would be achieved and they would manage any difficulties ahead.

b. Equestrian Qualifications

At the end of the course the students openly acknowledged that they had begun the course with insufficient knowledge and preparation in equestrian skills for professional practice. They suggested that 150 hours of riding is not enough experience to be an EAA/T practitioner (Figure 4.3, p. 137).

In Figure 4.3 below are student responses demonstrate that they believe various types of equestrian skills are important, and must be included. The very high score of 4.93 at the end of the course suggested that they believed a basic knowledge of equestrian skills and horseback riding to practice EAA/T was extremely important.

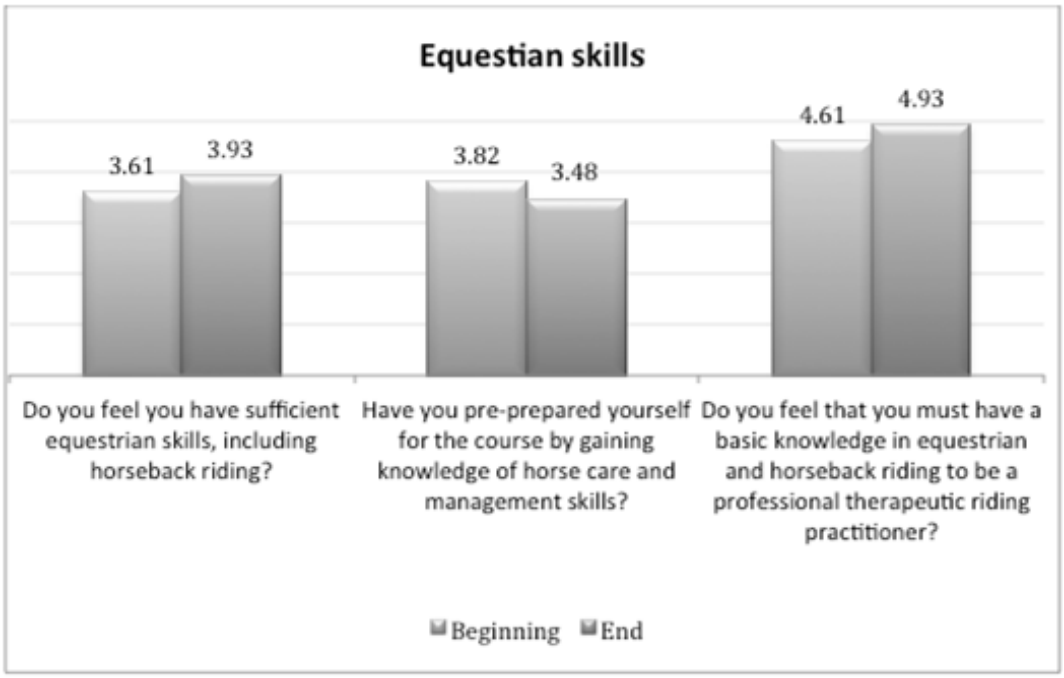

Figure 4.3 Student Responses to Importance of Equestrian Skills

c. Pathologies and Manifestations

The goal expectations expressed student desires to have as much content knowledge as possible to meet clients' needs. Still, when the scores were calculated there were two mean scores that indicated a significant decline in the sense of achievement and course satisfaction:

- Child Development Psychology
- Cognitive Psychology

Students reported that they did not understand child development and cognitive psychology, and that they believed they needed more preparation in these fields (Appendix 3.i). The need for additional training in the psychology modules emerged when comparing SQ scores in (Figure 4.4, p. 138) psychological topics at the beginning of training to those in (Figure 4.6, p. 140) given following EAA/T training. The differences represent the actual dissatisfaction with the training experience the students had during psychology modules.

Figure 4.4 represents **Student Responses to Importance of Psychophysical Topics**. Even though some responses were lower at the end of the course, they still remained

within the Likert scale (3-5), which was, important, must be included, and extremely important. Living Anatomy's high score of 4.8 represented extremely important.

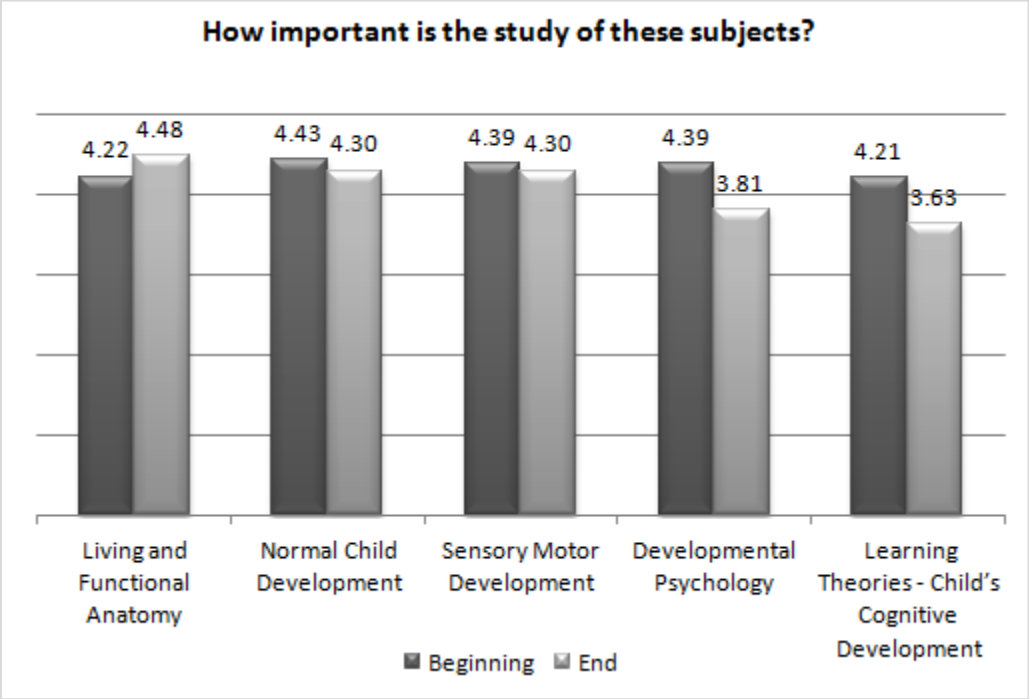

Figure 4.4 Student Responses to Importance of Psychophysical Topics

4.8.4 SQ: Incorporation of Pedagogic Paradigms

All thirty-six students indicated that they should receive every tool possible to make them a better EAA/T practitioner, by receiving support from both the theoretical and practical course educators (Figure 4.5, p. 139). Though most students at the beginning of the course did not know the meaning of pedagogic learning paradigms, it was obvious from some of their remarks that they were expecting that the EAA/T courses be based on student-centred learning. (Goal Type B - Learning 3 - Therapy Skills, in Appendix 2.iv).

Figure 4.5 below, describes student responses to the question: **How important is it to learn management, how to teach equestrian skills and how to engage with various stakeholders?** This question was asked both at the beginning and at the end of the course. At the beginning of the course students felt more positive about learning these new skills. By the end of the course they felt they had not had sufficient input from educators to understand and master the practice of these topics. However, the responses did show that

all these topics must be included, and felt that practical skills were very important and in most cases, extremely important.

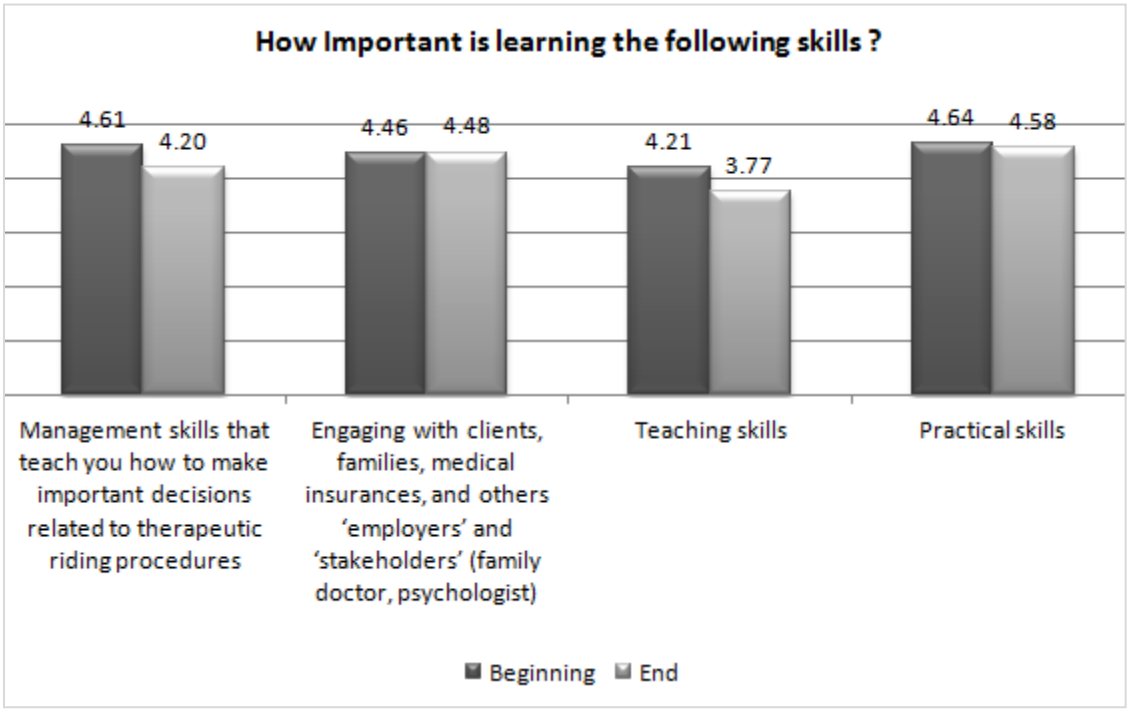

Figure 4.5: Student Responses to Importance of Practical Skills and Engagement with Stakeholders

Figure 4.6 below shows student responses given about the value of studying various theoretical topics at the beginning and at the end of the course. Physical and psychological pathologies were considered the most important and received the highest score at the end of the course. However, the range of scores (3.8-4.81) and minimal drop at the end of the course, does demonstrate that students still believed the topics were important and should be included, and in several cases, extremely important.

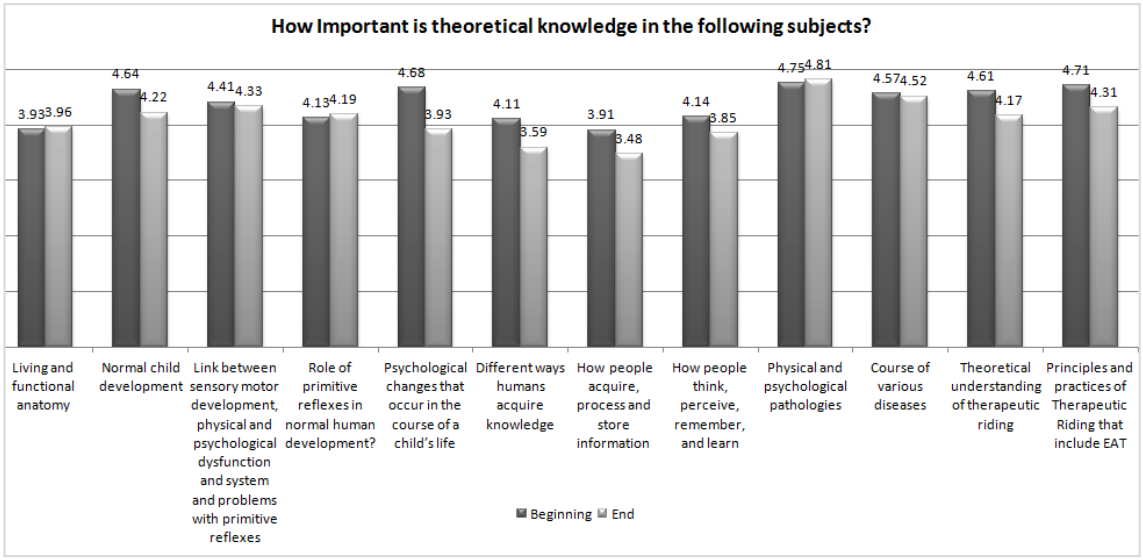

Figure 4.6: Student Responses to Various Theoretical Topics

4.8.5 SQ: Fusion and Integration

Students wanted an integrated and inclusive approach to learning. Again, student goals confirmed the desire to receive maximum knowledge and experience from the course that would help them to support the challenging needs of their clients (Appendix 2.iv).

4.9 Delphi Research Module 2: Expert Survey

The Delphi Experts (DEs') collectively agreed that there were several gaps that should be addressed if the EAA/T course is to be considered a professional training course. DEs drew attention to issues that needed resolving in order to move into stakeholder consensus. For instance, two experts in the second iteration argued for EAA/T educators and graduate practitioners need to learn basic classroom teaching skills, to become practitioners with sufficient knowledge and teaching skills to teach children equestrian and social skills (DEg, in Appendix 1.ix).

In the first iteration, DEs' were in 92% agreement that changes needed to be made in supervised practice and 79%, agreed that proficiency in the teaching paradigms was critical to achieving and maintaining good practice criteria. DEs were concerned that these two areas of the curriculum needed best educational practices, as part of any future curriculum (DEa - DEg, in Appendix 1.vii). The lowest scores represented concerns about

the usefulness of a future expanded curriculum, and awareness of the obstacles to adoption. The difference between scores in the first and third iteration could be related to the time gap between the first iteration and the third iteration, to changed opinions, or perhaps this research had become a platform to speak out for participating experts (p. 146 and p. 149). At the end of the first iteration experts were asked to rank topics in order of their perceived importance (Figure 4.7 p. 142). One expert said it was difficult to assign rank-scores, since he perceived all topics to be important. Several topics received the same scores. In the second iteration, experts provided comprehensive written responses, of their observations and clarified reasons why there were gaps in the curriculum (Figure 4.7, p. 142 and Appendix12.i). They felt there needs to be much more experiential learning (Figure 4.7, p. 142). In the third iteration, almost all responses came back on the same day (Kaufman, 2011; Linstone, 2002). The third iteration indicated the level of agreement reached by the experts. Using Mitroff and Turoff (2002) suggestions for reaching collective consensus, categories four and five (4- Agree Somewhat, 5- Agree Completely) were collected and interpreted to mean that collective consensus was achieved (Mitroff and Turoff, 2002). Mean scores of over 80% were also interpreted as having reached collective consensus (Hsu and Sandford, 2007). When three or more scores for each question were number three, (3= Neither Agree or Disagree) then consensus was not achieved. For example, DEs reached a score of seventy-three percent (73%) on the issue of including specialisation topics in a future expanded EAA/T curriculum (p. 148). The specialisation topics included subjects like physiotherapy and special education. No consensus was reached among the DEs and specialisation topics were rejected.

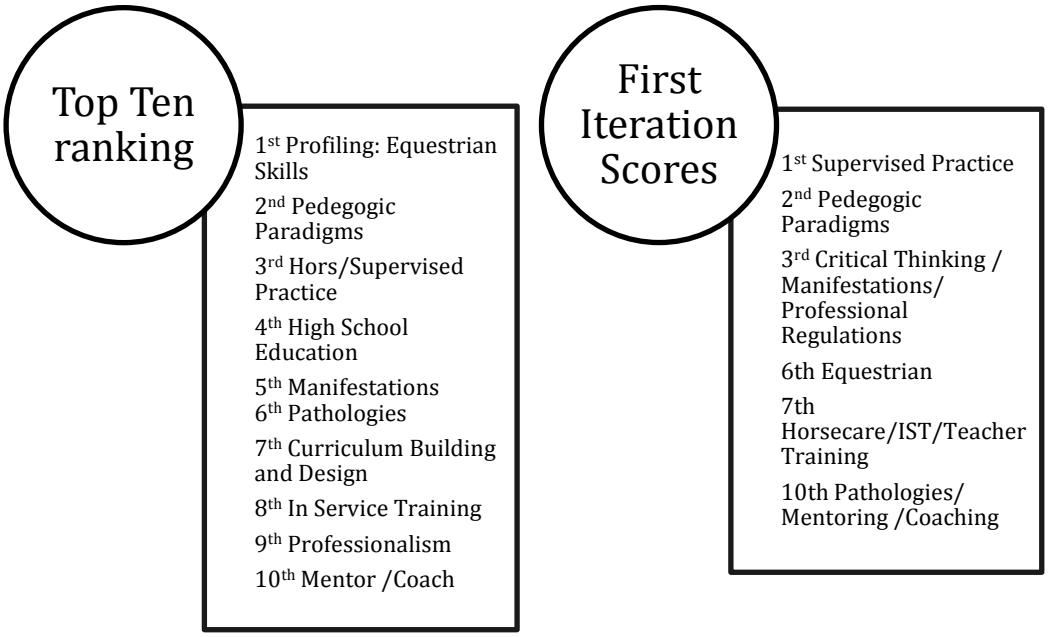

Figure 4.7: DE Survey Comparisons of Top Ten Rankings to the First Iteration

Comparable to SQ Topic Ranking (Appendix 2.ii)

4.9.1 First Iteration - Initial Questionnaire (QR1) Observations

During the first iteration, the initial questionnaire (QR1) was twenty questions long. These questions were sent to fourteen EAA/T experts. All experts responded very quickly to this round, which was sent via the Survey Monkey platform. However, it proved to have its limitations and was not used again after one expert reported experiencing technical difficulties with the platform. Once the responses were analysed, feedback was sent to the experts asking them if they would like to make any further revisions to their responses. There were no further responses during the first iteration (Appendix 10.i; Appendix 11.i).

4.9.2 Second Iteration Questionnaire (QR2) Observations

The second iteration (**Round 2)** had ten questions with multiple parts, which was sent to the same fourteen EAA/T experts. Each question, represented different aspects of a topic, providing an opportunity for experts to write opinions. In the second iteration, there were no requests to complete Likert scales or to rank order topics. The questionnaire was sent in word format via electronic mail due to the aforementioned technical difficulties with

the Survey Monkey platform. Only twelve experts agreed to participant in the second iteration as two found writing answers too time consuming. One participating expert solved the problem answering the questions using an audiotape. Another expert stopped participating due to personal reasons unrelated to the survey. **Round 2** provided a platform where ideas for a future professional curriculum could be activated (Appendix 12.i; Appendix 13.i).

4.9.3 Third Iteration Questionnaire (QR3) Observations

The third iteration, and final round, was a questionnaire containing forty-two questions. These questions were sent to thirteen experts out of the original fourteen and twelve responded. Two experts dropped out of iteration three, one for personal reasons and another because he felt he had already answered all the questions. All experts maintained their own anonymity and did nothing to jeopardise the anonymity of others. The questionnaire was sent in word format via electronic mail, as this appeared to be the most successful method. Answers required the use of Likert scales. Results were promptly returned. Feedback was sent to the experts for further comments (Appendix 14.i; Appendix 15.i).

4.10 Delphi Research Module 2: DE Expert Survey Key Findings

4.10.1 DE Expert Survey: Professional Validation and Personal Development

In the first iteration 64.29% (**QR1-4)** experts were convinced it was *desirable* and 21% thought it was **very desirable** to shift EAA/T training towards an academic curriculum. Respondents indicated that such a shift would enrich and professionalise the discipline, while establishing a career path for adult learners (p. 145). In the second iteration (**QR2-4)** responses further congealed towards a spiral curriculum, providing possibilities of secondary and tertiary degrees (Appendix 1.iv). Experts recognised that EAA/T needed to be a profession in its own right. By the third iteration experts collectively agreed (91%) that the curriculum needed professionalising with an upgrade to at least first-degree

status. Raising the bar in the direction of a university education would deepen the teaching and learning spectrum providing more opportunities including research (p. 148).

Experts agreed that EAA/T practice and training needed some form of governance for the maintenance and management of quality standards and introducing mandatory laws and licensing procedures. Experts grappled with the idea that good governance was an essential part of curriculum building even though some of the experts mentioned that government control could restrict academic freedom. The dilemma remained as to **who should take on this role**. Suggestions ranged from well-known experts in the field to national governments (Appendix 1.v).

In **the first iteration,** most experts who chose a Likert Scale response - desirable or very desirable, gave supervised practice the highest score. The lowest scores represented the concerns of two respondents who suggested:

a. **QR1- 2:** Twelve years of high school education should not be an admission benchmark for EAA/T training but rather an equivalent high school diploma, this would not eliminate that had received alternative methods of education. (Appendix 10.i Appendix 11.i)
b. **QR1- 5** The focus should be the client, anyone offering EAA/T should have a high proficiency with horses or work with someone who has this proficiency (Appendix 10.i)

Table 4.7: 1st Iteration Key Findings from the DE Expert Survey

1st Iteration: Round 1 Delphi Survey % Likert Scale / Participant Responses					
Questions	**% Definitely not Desirable**	**% Undesirable**	**% Slightly Desirable**	**% Desirable**	**% Very Desirable**
QR1-1 Equestrian Skills			7.1	28.57	64. 28
QR1-2 High Sch. Education	14.29	14.29		50	21.43
QR1-3 High Sch. Matriculation			50	28.57	21.43
QR1-4 Curriculum Building			14.29	64.29	21.43
QR1-5 Horse Knowledge Horse-Care / Manage	7.14		21.43	21.43	50
QR1-6 Critical Thinking				35.71	64.29
QR1-7 Self Management			28.57	35.71	35.71
QR1-8 Pathologies				57.14	42.86
QR1-9 Manifestations			7.14	28.57	64.29
QR1-10 Pedagogic Paradigms				21.43	78.57
QR1-11 Supervised Practice				7.14	92.86
QR1-12 In Service Training			21.43	28.57	50
QR1-13 Professional Recognition			7.14	28.57	64.29
QR1-14 Interaction with Medical and Education Profession			14.29	50	35.71
QR1-15 Teacher Training			21.43	28.57	50
QR1-16 Mentor/ Coaching			7.14	50	42.86
QR1-17 Supplementary Study	7.14		21.43	57.14	14.29
QR1-18 Academic Quality Control		7.14	28.57	35.71	28.57

4.10.2 DE Expert Survey: Acquisition of Knowledge

a. Principles of Educational practice

In the first iteration, experts focused on mentor training. DEs felt that the use of mentors could strengthen the EAA/T curriculum and facilitate the achievement of high-level competencies. However, DEs could not agree on a time frame in which EAA/T students would have to meet these competencies. One expert stated that a mentor needed five years of experience in the field and work experience of at least three days a week to qualify. Others proposed national exams for mentorship.

Although barely mentioned in the first iteration, educator-training programmes for EAA/T staff lecturers became one of the focal points of the second iteration **(QR2-5)**.

Experts argued for the need to advance educator-training programmes to build skills and teaching competencies. Some experts proposed that EAA/T educators must be trained in the principles of pedagogy and andragogy and be taught up to date knowledge in the various courses that make up the EAA/T curriculum. One expert went so far as to suggest that educators should not enter any classroom unless he or she has the above skills (Appendix 11.i). By the third iteration there was a 95% agreement that educator knowledge, and especially knowledge of how to teach adults, was crucial for any future EAA/T curriculum (DEa, in Appendix 1.vii).

b. Equestrian Qualifications

Equestrian qualifications are at the heart of EAA/T practice. In the first iteration, many experts proposed that horsemanship experience and horsemanship skills should be pre-requisites for enrolling in any EAA/T course (**QR1-1).** Scores ranged between 64.28% very desirable and 21.7% desirable. In Israel, experts recommended that national accreditation criteria include certification as a riding instructor. By the second iteration (**QR2-1)** some experts were advocating that equestrian qualifications be *mandatory* for all practitioners (DEb - DEf, in Appendix 1.viii)**.** As EAA/T is a holistic approach it should be accepted that practitioners must know how to facilitate the human/horse interaction and subsequent healing. By the third iteration there was a 94% agreement that equestrian skills are the underpinning structure of any EAA/T curriculum (Appendix 1.viii).

c. Pathologies and Manifestations

In the first iteration, 64.29% (**QR1-9**) (p. 145) experts argued for more content knowledge and especially in the area of pathologies and their manifestations. They proposed that sufficient knowledge in these topics would make graduates more confident and EAA/T a better treatment intervention (p. 145). In the second iteration (though not specifically asked), experts continued to press for more practice opportunities. By the third iteration, experts answered multiple questions about various topics associated with pathologies and manifestations, and came to the collective agreement (94%) that these topics were fundamental to any future curriculum (p. 148; DEa - DEg, in Appendix 1.ix).

4.10.3 DE Expert Survey: Incorporation of Pedagogic Paradigms

In the first and second iterations, experts reflected upon the importance of PBL and AL as critical learning paradigms. In the first iteration 78.57% (**QR1-6** and **QR1-10)** of experts thought it was very desirable and 21.43% desirable that the incorporation of pedagogic paradigms created a balance between experiential/ hands on learning, and academic classroom-based learning (p. 145). In the second iteration (**QR2-8)** experts argued for group learning, PBL, AL, and role-playing as reflective practices crucial to bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practice (DEa – DEf, in Appendix 1.x). Understanding how to cross this gap would lead to providing practitioners with the observation and critical thinking skills necessary for effective fieldwork. By the third iteration experts agreed (95%) that these skills were an integral part of any future curriculum (p. 148; Appendix 1.x).

4.10.4 DE Expert Survey: Fusion and Integration

DEs agreed that the lack of fusion and integration was a gap in the EAA/T curricula. However, it took three iterations to reach a collective consensus. The first iteration produced a mixed score, 50% desirable and 37.51% very desirable, as some experts could not visualise how multidisciplinary content knowledge could be fused into practice (p. 145). By the third iteration there was a 95% agreement that fusion and integration were crucial components of any future curriculum. The fusion and integration of theory with practice requires experienced educators (DEd - DEf, in Appendix 1.xi).

There were differences of opinion when it came to in service training (IST). In round one an expert proposed IST become an extension of the EAA/T curriculum, while another had no use for IST in its current form. By the third iteration collective consensus envisioned IST as a curriculum extension supporting graduates (p. 145) throughout their career.

Table 4.8: DE Expert Survey Third Iteration and Final Round Scores

See on next page (p. 149). Collective consensus represents strong agreement that suggested topics should comprise the curriculum, and should be more in-depth. Despite some participants unsure of ways to accomplish this, the final score remained high (Appendix 14.i).

Questions	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10	A11	A12	Mean Score	Con. %
1. Living Anatomy	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	4.7	93%
2. Normal Child Dev.	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4.8	97%
3. Sensory Motor	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4.8	97%
4. Child Dev. Psy.	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	4.8	97%
5. Child Dev. Psy.	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	5	3	5	4	5	4.3	87%
6. Cog Child Psy.	5	5	4	5	4	4	4	5	3	5	5	5	4.5	90%
7. Cog Child Psy.	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	4.8	97%
8 Pathologies	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4.9	98%
9 Pathologies	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4.7	93%
10 Manifestations	5	5	4	4	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4.7	93%
11 Manifestations	5	5	4	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4.7	93%
12 Principles of Practice	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4.8	97%
13 Principles of Practice	5	5	5	5	5	4	3	5	5	5	4	5	4.7	93%
14 Principles of Practice	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	100%
15 Principles of Practice	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4.9	98%
16 Principles of Practice	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	100%
17 Theoretical Skills	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4.9	98%
18 Theoretical Skills	5	5	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4.75	95%
19 Theoretical Skills	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	4	5	5	4.7	93%
20 Theoretical Skills	4	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4.75	95%
21 Educational Skills	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	5	4.8	97%
22 Educational Skills	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	4.91	98%
23 Educational Skills	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	5	5	5	4	4.5	92%
24 Educational Skills	5	5	3	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	4.7	93%
25 Practicum	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4.9	98%
26 Practicum	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	5	4.75	95%
27 Practical Skills	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	4.75	95%
28 Practical Skills	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	2	4	5	5	4.5	90%
29 Supervised Practice	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	4	5	5	4.8	97%
30 Supervised Practice	5	5	5	5	5	5	N/A	5	5	4	5	5	4.9	98%
31 Supervised Practice	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	100%
32 Equestrian skills	5	5	5	4	5	5	5	3	5	3	4	5	4.5	90%
33 Equestrian Skills	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	4.8	97%
34 Equestrian Skills	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	3	5	3	5	5	4.5	90%
35 Equestrian Skills	5	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4.8	97%
36 A Future Expand. Curr.	5	4	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4.75	95%
37 Future Expand. Curr	5	4	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	N/A	5	4.8	95%
38 Future Expand. Curr	3	4	3	4	5	4	3	3	5	5	4	5	4	80%
39 Future Expand. Curr	4	4	2	4	5	3	3	3	4	3	4	5	3.7	73%
40 Future Expand. Curr	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	3	4	5	5	5	4.75	95%
41 Future Expand. Curr	5	4	4	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	5	5	4.7	93%
42 Future Expand. Curr	5	4	5	5	5	4	3	N/A	5	5	5	5	4.7	93%
43 Future Expand. Curr	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	N/A	5	5	5	5	5	100%
Total													**4.7**	**94%**

4.11 Chapter Summary

Data collection and analysis was an ongoing inductive process where the data gathered from insights, interactions and debates required reading and rereading to form abstract concepts and generalisations that collectively, served to identify gaps in the curriculum. The key findings reinforce the findings from the literature review and reaffirmed the belief that EAA/T curricula needs reframing.

The strategy of analysis employed produced an agenda with which the Delphi experts were asked to work. Constantly comparing the data collected from different sources helped define the critical gaps that existed in the curriculum (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007). These primary insights required an analytical strategy that employed transcribing, coding, categorising and thematising (Bryant and Charmaz, 2007. This method produced findings that suggested that several gaps exist in the curriculum. Later, the DEs required a whole new genre of analysis to produce a collective consensus through three iterations of questionnaires and feedback methods. The strategy was to include numerical interpretations for analysis, but it is noteworthy to say that numerical analysis was limiting, and neglected the feelings behind participants' intentions and statements.

This strategy of analysis connected me with colleagues and EAA/T experts and other stakeholders participating in this study. It made distance irrelevant. It set me at the intersection of sociology, politics and literature, all components of a system I was investigating, providing access to both theory and practice from various perspectives. Although positioned at the intersection, maintaining strict boundaries encouraged my critical thinking and creativity, while enhancing my communication skills.

The next chapter will critically review the key findings of this study testing the limits of internal and externally validity of the findings. If EAA/T is to adapt and become a modern professional occupation, it is important to analyse and discuss existing curriculum structures that might be preventing its development and consider those that would facilitate its development.

Chapter Five

Chapter 5: Delphi Method Module 4: Analysis and Discussion

The previous chapter reported the key findings of the Delphi Method. These key findings were the result of a robust enquiry where rich data was collected from insights, Focus Groups (FG), Interviews (IN), Student Questionnaires (SQ) and a Delphi expert survey (DE). This valuable information was the result of observations made by practitioners, students and experts in the field who brought up important issues that could impact any new future curriculum development. The analysis of the newfound information was a process that started with a macro overview of the data and proceeded through narrowing lenses until it reached a saturation point and collective consensus. The Delphi Method (Delphi) explored issues relevant to EAA/T training and practice. The Delphi was able to validate the relevancy of these issues by bringing to bear information that represented the experience thoughts and feelings of large populations of practitioners represented by DEs.

This chapter discussed and analysed the key findings in relation to the central theme of the research. 'Equine Assisted Activities and Therapy (EAA/T): Towards a Future Curriculum'. The central research question asked what were the learning standards and how were learning objectives being met and, what were the best possible teaching strategies for EAA/T. In order to test the validity of the study's findings, these findings were triangulated with data from the DEs collective consensus. The layout of the chapter followed the order of the key findings. It concluded by linking the research findings to current thinking regarding the components of a new EAA/T curriculum, and provided a research critique and short summation of the chapter's discussion and analysis.

5.1 Delphi Method Key Findings

Four interlaced key findings revealed various gaps in the curriculum:

1. **Professional and Personal Development**
2. **Acquisition of Knowledge**
3. **Incorporation of Pedagogic Paradigms**
4. **Fusion and Integration**

Until this research was undertaken there had been only local discussions, during organisational meetings regarding the gaps in the EAA/T training and the growing perception that these gaps are causing irreparable damage to EAA/T practice. During some of the international conferences (HETI Conference, Athens, 2012) EAA/T practitioners spoke about their intense feelings of marginalisation and isolation in their work, and the frustration of their aspirations to *'move out of the shadowy margins and into the mainstream, to claim their rightful status in the life and work'* (Brown, 2010, p. 74). Since 'pioneers' in this international debate spoke at international conferences (Literature Review, p. 7) there has been little suggestion in the **public forum** that EAA/T needs to raise the bar for EAA/T training and professionalism. In 2012 at the Athens conference Renker, et al., Kreindler and Kreindler, and Shkedi, provided three separate presentations suggesting the need for changes in the EAA/T training curriculum (Quote, IN2, p. 153).

For many EAA/T practitioners it had become frustrating that other specialist disciplines like Eagala and Epona were invading arena space and fractionalising the job. Practitioners wanted EAA/T to be recognised by the public as a profession. Throughout the Delphi enquiry practitioners made it clear they wanted to fight back and regain their status as Equine Assisted Activities Specialists. This depth of feeling coming from practitioners made the research project even more significant.

Quote:IN2

Riding Instructors (EAA/T) keep getting pushed in the barn. These other people, (therapists and mental healthworkers) will say that we are out of our league.

5.2 Delphi Method Module 4: Analysis and Discussion: Four Key Gap Areas

The Delphi Method and the literature review revealed gaps in **four key areas of** EAA/T curricula. These four key areas identified by the findings require further analysis, discussion and verification before being recommended for any new future curriculum.

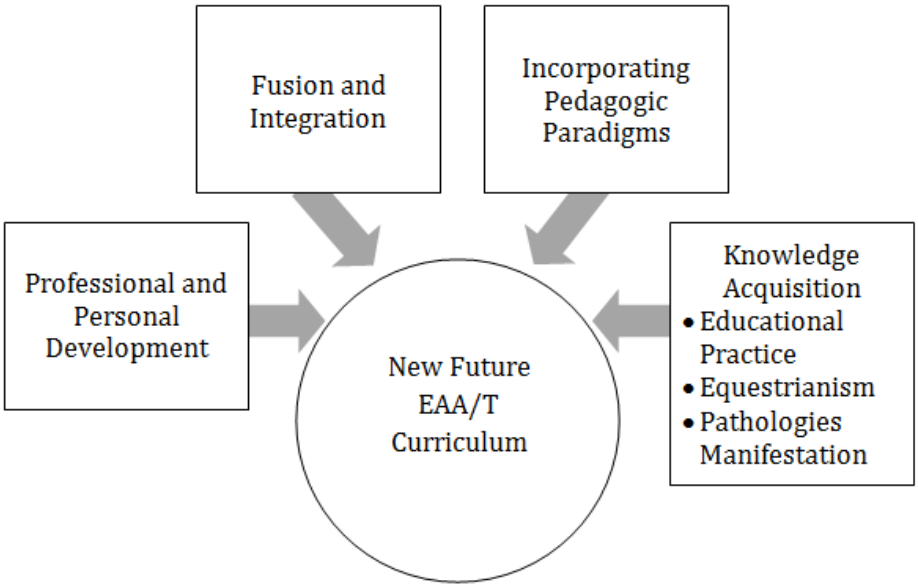

Figure 5.1: Four Key Gap Areas

5.3 Key Finding in Area 1. Professionalism and Personal Development

Categories and subcategories:

- **Professionalism**
  - Training
    - Theory, practice and personal experience
    - Well prepared, skilled and competent educators
  - Admission Policy
  - Academic Degree
    - Raising the bar
    - Spiral Curriculum
    - Scaffolding
  - Governance
    - Validation
    - Adoption

5.3.1 Area 1. Category: Professionalism

Throughout the Delphi process (Delphi) there emerged a powerful lobby for an EAA/T curriculum to be professionally proficient, and create learning opportunities, while

building professional knowledge and skills for graduates to practice EAA/T competently (Quotes DE, p. 156). The desire to be professionally proficient is reflected in Iwasiw, Goldenberg and Andrusyszyn's (2009) argument that professional knowledge contributes to the quality of life of those EAA/T practitioners serve. To achieve a much-desired professional status, the responders indicated three specific areas that required change: organisation, validation and adoption. Within these areas were specific issues that need to be addressed, namely: **training, governance, attitude, and monetary incentives.** Collectively there was a sense that if these issues were addressed, a future curriculum could generate a new type of EAA/T practitioner, one that would create new knowledge, core values, and ethics. Such a transformation would signal to clients, stakeholders and the public that the ethical underpinnings of EAA/T, its assessment strategies and evaluation, interventions and service were valid. Collectively there was a consensual desire ***'to be recognised as a profession in its own right'*** (Appendix 1.ii).

EAA/T professionalism has its own characteristics, which go beyond any formal classroom curriculum. It has a hidden curriculum that requires prospective EAA/T practitioners (PEPs) to possess special characteristics. The EAA/T practitioner needs to maintain integrity in an arena where they are responsible for the safety of their clients, volunteers, horses and equipment. EAA/T practitioners must develop sensitivity to both humans and horses recognising that both species are sensitive and are controlled by overriding emotions and intuitive responses (Rees, Monrouxe and Ajjawi and Verna 2014). McDowell (2010) maintains that practitioners cannot escape their ties to the community, which constitute the very reason for their existence (Literature Review, p. 40). From my point of view as an insider researcher, EAA/T practitioners require qualities in the workplace that can be applied to human and horse challenges. These qualities are building interpersonal skills, completing tasks, communication, focus and attention. In addition, Dalton and Crosby (2011) and the Polk-Lepson Research Group York in Pennsylvania USA (2013) reported in their study the National Professionalism Survey, Workplace Report that are that it is important for professionals to have core values sustainable beyond graduation. Core values such as a developed sense of responsibility toward future clients, and the competencies needed to become skilled practitioners fuse together and become the foundation of EAA/T praxis.

Delphi Experts Quotes 1st Iteration:

Quote:Delphi Expert *'A correct curriculum is needed with a range of qualifications that allows EAA/T practitioners and facilitators/coaches the chance to be recognised as professionals'*

Quote:Delphi Expert *'The more professional, the wider and academic the course, the better chance of turning out quality therapists'.*

Quote:Delphi Expert
'*Supporting the development of this profession through institutional learning(college and university) is an important step to increase validation of the field'*

5.3.2 Area 1. Category: Professionalism, Subcategory: Training

5.3.2a Theory, Practice and Personal Experience

Professionalism, personal development and training were on the minds of all responders who proposed that there were existing gaps between theories, practice and personal experience which interfered with quality training (Table 4.8, p. 148). Collective consensus among DEs, which may be considered the most factual insight, produced 95% collective agreement that the bar should be raised and the curriculum professionalised (p. 148). Cross-matching DE responses with FG, and IN observations, and evidence from the eight component questions there was considerable concern that standards were dropping and training gaps were widening between the application of theoretical knowledge acquired in the class room and the element of supervised practice and equestrian skills (p. 116). These concerns implied real differences between the practical and theoretical course work, which confirmed findings that recommendations for the future curriculum should include the demand for a more rigorous supervised practice (Appendix 1.v.ii).

Many recently qualified FG responders allowed fresh memories of poor practical experiences to dominate. They found the FG forum a place to express strong feelings

about their EAA/T practical experience. Sometimes FG responders forcefully vocalised that the curriculum did not provide sufficient skills for practice, or supply quality supervisors for authentic practice (FGa, in Appendix 1.xi). In contrast, IN's, who were experienced EAA/T educators and practitioners, chose to express their feelings by discussing the possible academisation of EAA/T and their desire for more advanced equestrian training schemes. For instance, there was a wide gap between FG and IN responses regarding the level of equestrian skills reached by EAA/T trainees (Table 4.2a and Table 4.2b, p. 123). Expert EAA/T interviewees, in contrast, had extensive field experience, which perhaps made it more possible to focus on the wider picture and the future needs of the profession.

5.3.2b Well Prepared, Skilled and Competent Educators

In the third iteration, the final twelve DEs provided a 98% collective consensus (p. 148), and most IN responders vigorously emphasised the importance of constructive learning for EAA/T practitioners (DEc, in DEd, DEg, in Appendix 1.vii; Appendix 1.ix). When asked how a future curriculum could equip practitioners with skills, to provide knowledge, acceptable attitudes and the behaviours required to perform tasks effectively in the classroom and in the field, an expert replied: **holistic teacher training**. Ninety-five percent (95%) of the DE's reached a collective consensus, recognised the wider picture and argued for **the provision of well-prepared teachers who can propagate student knowledge in a rich learning environment,** with policies for quality assurance. This view received additional weight when EAA/T students answered questions four and five in their questionnaires (SQ), the student answers demonstrated a decline in the interest they had in some topics throughout the course. To understand these negative results, the course administrator was asked to investigate. She found that the decline in topic ratings was related to poorly prepared lectures. Student achievements were low and they reported difficulties with interpreting theory for practical application in the field (Appendix 3.i, Appendix 2.iii; Figure 4.4, p. 138).

DEs suggested the need for supportive training environments where the educators' expertise could transform prospective EAA/T practitioners into expert practitioners who could cope with EAA/T jobs in various settings (FGf, in Appendix 1.iv; FGe, in Appendix 1.vii). This point of view correlated with and substantiated the observations of McHugh

and Lake (2011). It also concurred with Pasquenelli, Allori and Papini's (2009) EAA/T model that employed high calibre multidisciplinary professional educators in a rich learning environment. A possible drawback to this model is that experts may become too theoretical, teacher-orientated and distanced from practice. FG7 participants were concerned that a high-level professional educator in the classroom and a specialist in the arena may not serve EAA/T practitioner epistemologies (Appendix 6.i). Kim and Abernathy (2009) proposed that the gap between educators teaching theoretical modules and the practical application of the theory in the arena could become so large that educators no longer engaged with or negotiated with students the complexities of teaching/learning in relation to practice. Gillespie and McFetridge (2006) maintained that nurse educators should not disengage from the clinical setting, but rather engage to facilitate and make theoretical components come to life and encourage reflective, motivating practice.

Conversely, Delphi responders recognised that it was important to keep the balance between theoretical knowledge, equestrian skills and praxis. Collectively, they proposed that any new future curriculum should provide experienced equestrian trainers for equestrian skills, and human-horse bonding techniques as well as expert educator/mentors for supervised practice (DEc, DEe, in Appendix 1.vii and viii; Appendix 2.iii).

When focus groups (FG) participants were asked if the curriculum sufficiently trained EAA/T students to meet client needs the answer was a resounding **no** (p. 118). Some FG and IN responders maintained that poor training methods led to graduate insecurities and poor practice (p. 116). SQ responses suggested that EAA/T students had high expectations and wished to become working professionals (Table 4.1a-4.1b, pp. 122-125; Figure 4.4, p. 138, Appendix 2.iv).

FG and IN responders vocalised weaknesses in experiential learning, which probably accounted for the lack of responses to some of the questions (Table 4.3a and 4.3b, p. 124). Some DEs argued that educators should possess knowledge of social and generational differences that exist in adult learning (Appendix 14.i.). EAA/T students wanted a life changing experience. These observations are supported by Mezirow's (1991) transformative learning theory. Wang and Sarbo (2004) argued that educators must understand their educative purpose, i.e. whether it is to build intellectual powers, or

enhance a behaviour perspective. Wang and Sarbo (2004) and Bacorn-Bastable (2008) suggested education has been moving for some time from being teacher-centred to becoming student-centred, thus changing the primary role of the teacher to facilitator. EAA/T training must move in the same direction. EAA/T staff must become facilitators.

EAA/T practitioner training is likely to be much more successful when the educator can guide the learner to determine his or her own objectives for learning and decision-making. The journey increases the learners' recall, application of information and ultimately client involvement and a better quality of life. This is further discussed on page 172.

To summarise, DEs and IN practitioners suggested that an educator's role was to ensure that EAA/T students acquire a positive attitude towards authentic practice by realising their potential, being open to change and remain willing to continue learning (Appendix 1.vii). If educators are to positively influence EAA/T student professional development, they must be able to adjust to different situations. In the broadest sense the educator's role could provide intellectual, moral and spiritual support to the adult learner. If EAA/T students will study in a learning environment where shared knowledge, professional growth, and progressive methods of instruction are the rule and not the exception (Table 4.3a and 4.3b, p. 124; Table 4.7, p. 145 and Table 4.8, p. 148), the quality of training would improve and the knowledge gaps that exist between theory and practice would close. This idea resonated in the work of Allsopp, DeMarie, McHatton and Doone (2006) who found that practitioners succeed, when teaching and learning academic institutions are open to new ideas regarding their goals.

5.3.3 Area 1. Category: Professionalism, Subcategory: Admission Policy

In the second iteration, DEs agreed with FG and IN participants that the admission policy should be improved if the level of training is to be raised (OC Profile, in Appendix 1.i; FGb, FGc, in Appendix 1.iii). Student questionnaires (SQ) revealed that PEPs freely acknowledged that they had entered the course with insufficient knowledge and preparation in equestrian skills for professional practice (Table 4.3a and Table 3b, p. 125, and Figure 4.3, p. 137). Pre-requisites for admission should include student profiling (EAA/T profile, in Appendix 1.xiii, Appendix 1.iii). Responders maintained that colleges and organisations worldwide are accepting students without equestrian qualifications,

high school education or equivalent education. This strategy increases the numbers of the student cohorts and creates monetary gain. Furthermore, Beard, Morote and Volcy (2013) maintained that diverse entry qualifications and in some cases low-level proficiency, caused educators to modify and lower the learning level of the training (FGa, in Appendix 1.iii; Appendix 6.i). Collectively, DEs agreed that students should only be accepted if they had completed high school, or the equivalent. One DE argued that today, even stable staff in his country was expected to have matriculated high school. He qualified his statement by saying that there are so many teaching and learning methods and examination techniques that it is now possible for many more students to achieve matriculation. He suggested that only in rare cases exemptions could be given after a personal portfolio is examined. Another expert suggested that students undergo a psychological assessment for entry qualifications, in addition to displaying a natural attachment to humans and horses. According to Chansarker and Michaeloudis (2001) student performance correlates to entry qualifications. Disparities in academic performance throughout the course have been related to entry qualifications, suggesting that there is an urgent need to review and redefine minimum entry qualifications (p. 144). Chansarker and Michaeloudis (2001) suggested that students who entered the programme with higher proficiencies performed better throughout the course and earned a higher degree than those who entered with lower qualifications (Chansarker and Michaeloudis, 2001).

Any future curriculum that includes a shift towards an academic degree must attract students with higher qualification and skills. However, this would affect many EAA/T programmes' entry requirements and even prevent many students from being accepted. Adewale, Bolanie-Adhuze (2014) researched entry levels for an architects' course in a Nigerian polytechnic. They found a correlation between the current admission policy and academic achievement. When students were admitted onto the architects' course with no basic knowledge of fine arts/technical drawing, it had a profound effect on the pass rate and the quality of the architects who actually qualified. Their findings concluded that students should undergo a one-year pre-course before admission. Similarly, EAA/T students could enter a preparatory course to acquire equestrian skills before being accepted to the EAA/T training programme.

In summary, admission policy is very important for the future of EAA/T and needs further study. Any new policy should be designed to encourage any student who has a natural aptitude, without necessarily having the academic criteria, to make EAA/T their vocation. Prior to admission, there should be opportunities for a foundation year through which the necessary academic standards can be achieved. This will include people who have been out of mainstream education for a protracted time and those who are not naturally academic achievers.

5.3.4 Area 1. Category: Professionalism, Subcategory: Academic Degree (Expanding Curriculum)

5.3.4a Raising the Education Bar

Collective consensus amongst DEs **(**93%) confirmed responses from all IN interviewees as well as a number of the FG participants that professionalism would enhance and maintain high standards, regulatory controls and validation. '*If we are to increase professionalism in the field - we need- higher levels of education'* (DEa, in Appendix 1.iv). Many were convinced that poor public perception of EAA/T is caused by the lack of advancement within a professional paradigm (DEa, in Appendix 1.ii; DEa, in Appendix 1.iii).

Currently EAA/T could be labelled semi-professional. Most EAA/T practitioners are certified apart from a few in the USA who do not have qualifications in EAA/T. Being a practicing semi-professional may lead to a lack of confidence among stakeholders and the public and reinforces the perception of the **horse handler** role. DEs agreed that raising educational levels from intermediate to higher education would provide more content knowledge and the skill development necessary to improve performance. Currently many EAA/T curricula are providing a syllabus comprised of basic topics, but unfortunately they are only introductory in nature and do not provide a sufficient knowledge base. Renker et al., (2012) suggested that EAA/T programmes should provide a higher level of education, which would provide **college or university-based standards**. The argument for higher education concurs with other sources. Leitch (2006) argues that employers

should screen candidates for specific qualifications, since employers feel that a more qualified employee is likely to provide greater productivity and quality of service.

Leitch (2006) suggests that shifting the balance of intermediate skills to a first-degree qualification improves self-esteem and the quality of skills. A curriculum that includes rigorous tests that graduates are obliged to pass would raise the training bar creating new opportunities for post-secondary education and tertiary education (Leitch, 2006). Gordon (2007) maintained that investigating any future curriculum and paying attention to the smallest details could assure course providers and the public that graduates are up to the task.

Collectively experts and most FG and IN responders agreed that raising the bar for a new future curriculum is necessary for stakeholder confidence (FGb, FGe, INd, in Appendix 1.iv; UO Stab-behav, UO Raising Bar, in Appendix 1.xii). Raising the bar could encourage medical specialists and health care providers to refer more challenged learners to EAA/T practitioners for preventive treatments, rehabilitation, or for remedial purposes, and include them in patients' therapeutic processes (INd, in Appendix 1.iv; DEc, DEf, in Appendix 1.xi). Such a shift in training and subsequent practice would produce stakeholder consensus that EAA/T is an effective lifestyle naturopathy, focusing on non-invasive treatments that help the body do its own healing. EAA/T could be prescribed for task-orientated treatments in normal life situations (Wade, 2000). However, it is noteworthy to say that two DEs and one FG responder were concerned that a new future curriculum might disband the existing EAA/T workforce. They noted that there are many good practitioners who have been working for several years in the field, which had no desire to engage with an academic programme, but are content to be kept up-to-date and stay well informed (Appendix 1.iii).

5.3.4b A Spiral Curriculum

Some DEs anticipated that universities would be encouraged to provide EAA/T qualifications in the form of an expanded spiral curriculum, which would include secondary and tertiary education (Masters and Doctorate degrees) (FGa, FGd, in Appendix 1.iv). A spiral approach to an EAA/T practitioner's curriculum, could match instruction to student learning capabilities, but still have an overarching aim to move them

forward in their careers (Research for Teachers, 2006). A spiral curriculum builds a more complex learning environment that simultaneously develops student intuitive behaviours learned from a priori knowledge, (core topics) and reemphasises it many times (Figure 5.2, p. 164). As the learning process shifts from diploma to degree and specialisation, the curriculum advances with new information added, making it possible for the EAA/T practitioner to carry out even more specialised and complex tasks. The spiral approach prevents early specialisation, which concerned the IN5 interviewee who wanted the basics secured before any form of specialisation. It also substantiates Bruner's (1960) theory that advocated that a spiral curriculum has basic ideas, which are repeatedly built upon until they are fully understood. Bruner (1960) was convinced that learning should serve the future and should not only take the student somewhere, but should allow the student to go even further later with greater ease (Research for Teachers, 2006). Eccles and Templeton (2007) maintained that a spiral curriculum could provide educators with motivating pedagogic paradigms and meta-cognitive scaffolding that builds a psychologically and physically safe and inclusive learning environment. Crowther (1997) and Hmelo-Silver, Duncan and Chinn (2007) argued that a spiral curriculum with flexible cognitive scaffolds could innovatively integrate new information within existing knowledge structures presenting students with opportunities to engage in complex tasks that would otherwise be beyond their current abilities.

DE responders suggested that universities would welcome a spiral curriculum but maintained that educator training and experience was crucial for its success (Appendix 1.iv). Putambekar and Hubscher (2005) suggested that the educator's role only works if she or he has ongoing knowledge of a student's level of understanding of the activity and awareness of changes as the student progresses.

There is a growing realisation and acknowledgement by DEs that new demands are being put on EAA/T and a new curriculum should keep up with the growing complexities (DEd, INg, in Appendix 1.ix; FGa, FGf, in Appendix 1.x; Appendix 16.i). Choosing a spiral curriculum could provide possibilities for academic and vocational advancement and even possible specialisation. It could restructure EAA/T and include profiling for senior staff positions in therapeutic riding centres.

Figure 5.2 below conceptualises an EAA/T spiral curriculum supported by scaffolding. The ever-increasing academic advancement is shown on the left side, while core topics are on the right. Core topic information is revisited at every level, ever increasing the opportunity for practitioner expertise. The concept of the EAA/T spiral curriculum is based on Bruner's (1960) constructivist model and spiral curriculum for teaching and learning.

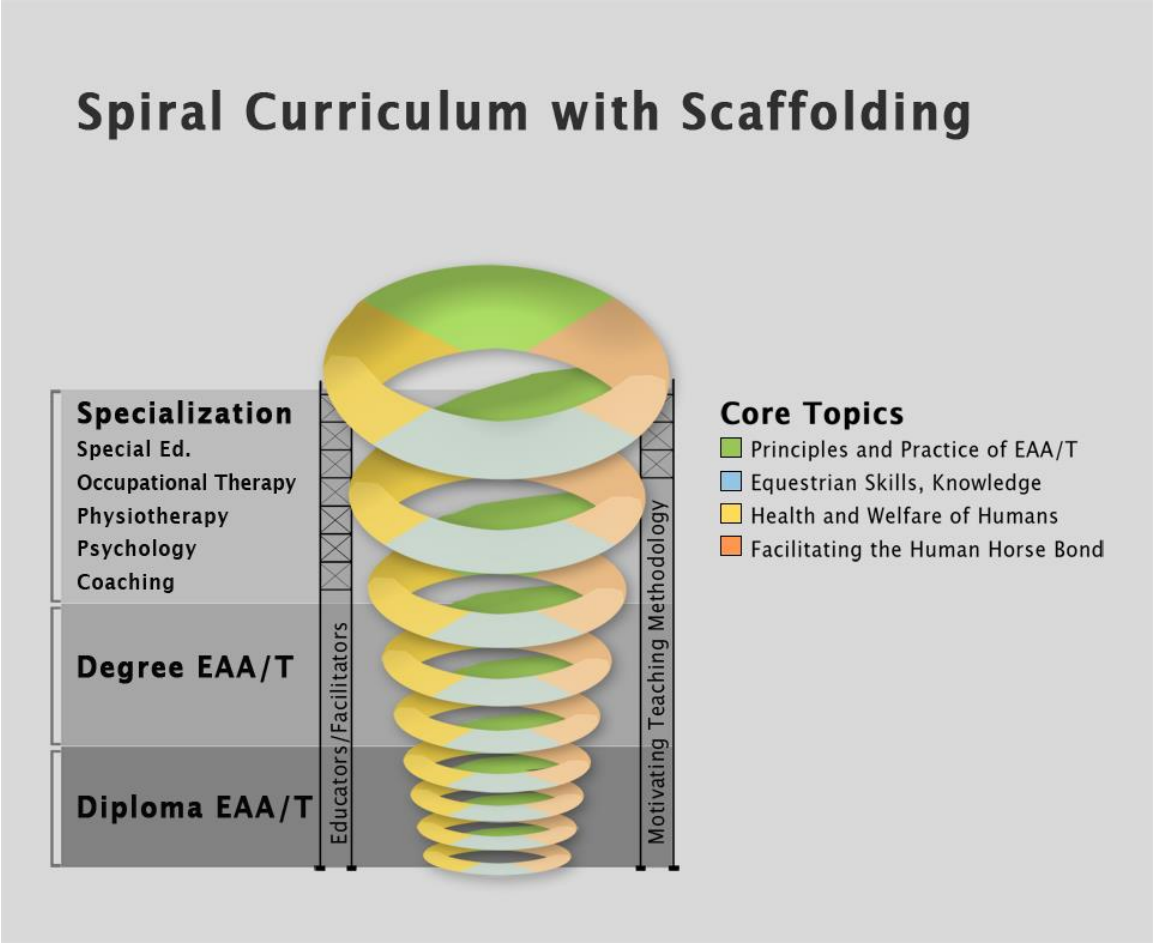

Figure 5.2: Concept of a Spiral Curriculum for EAA/T

5.3.5 Area 1. Category: Professionalism, Subcategory: Governance

A major drawback for EAA/T professionalism is that there is no real governance for EAA/T or its training programmes (Appendix 1.i). EAA/T pioneers in the USA did put forward arguments for governance in the 90's (Literature Review, p. 7). However, until today, governance remains fractured, volunteer-based and not fully committed (p. 4). Further, Renker et al. (2012) maintained that nothing changes as individual membership

driven organisations are self-regulating their own standards, criteria and methodology for certification.

DEs collectively agreed that a future curriculum required a commitment from both professionals and governance (DEa- DEf, in Appendix 1.v). One DE suggested that an international EAA/T governing body might provide the solution to governance with state governments controlling local education and health related issues. DEs' responses crosschecked with some FGs and IN responders who argued that mandatory rules and regulations, alongside a professional curriculum, would assure EAA/T regulators and all other stakeholders of consistency between the content and outcomes of EAA/T curricula. Israeli FG and IN acknowledged that instituting validation could warrant the recognition of EAA/T as a **professional occupation in its own right** by local stakeholders (medical insurances, governing bodies, clients, families and employers) (DEa, DEf, DEe, INa, in Appendix 1.iv). Most responders indicated that EAA/T should institute mandatory training standards that could support a professional paradigm and a level of organisation necessary for advancement (Quote DE, p. 166). These acknowledgements resonate with Cumming's (2013) premise that to meet clients' needs, professionals must possess appropriate qualifications and the commensurate skills, values and behaviours, to be able to deliver the right care in the right place at the right time (Cumming, HEE, 2013). Ravenhall, Hutchinson and Neary-Booth (2009) in a paper for the Centre for Enterprise (CFE), and the International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS), at the University of Derby, maintained that advancement is necessary but that it requires the commitment of '*the individual; the workplace; and the advancement agencies which support them'* (Ravenhall, Hutchinson and Neary-Booth, 2009, p. 2). For this to happen, national organisations must make a shift from existing policies based on volunteerism and entrepreneurism to a future governing system that ensures comprehensive quality assurance. Zulu, Murray and Strydom (2004) proposed shifts in higher education to "organisational cultures are vital for effective quality management systems" (Zulu, Murray and Strydom, 2004, p. 215). Currently, most EAA/T organisations have recommendations for standards for training, organisational development, coordination and revision of safety and activities, but these are all **voluntary** and do not have **mandatory powers**.

Quote:Delphi Expert

' A new organisation with total focus on education and training needs to be formed- creating an international standard, rather than national, which could then fit each country national standard within university academia and other well-established academic control. In the UK there are no national standards other than RDA and BHS neither of which offer the full spectrum of EAA/T or anything like a degree level curriculum'.

5.3.5a Validation

When DEs were asked the question, '*In your opinion, what would be the best way to ensure national standards and quality control for a future EAA/T curriculum?*' Responses (Appendix 1.i; Quote DE, p. 166) reflected the findings of Zulu, Murry and Stydom (2004) who argued that it was critical to have both a global and national organisation to take care of accountability. Without it, EAA/T in Israel and other countries could have disparities in EAA/T training courses. Each training course curriculum is decided by organisational committee consensus (DEa, FGC, INa, in Appendix 1.v).

Many responders implied that complete freedom allowed course providers to control the scale and scope of courses leaving little opportunity for investment in continuous learning, student growth and development (INa-INf, in Appendix 1.v). Barton (2014) argued that planned governance principles enable practitioners and employers to achieve the benefits of educational advancement and practice principles. Ravenhall et al. (2009) contended that national government must share aspirations as well as responsibilities in the advancement of adult careers. Leitch (2006) in his final government report states **advancement of skills unlocks potential** improvement of skills and quality of service and productivity.

However, some experts were pessimistic maintaining that governance could be restrictive and suggested EAA/T remained permeable, allowing a variety of academic developments. An expert replied to Q18, in round one of the DE survey as follows:

> *Undesirable, this sounds close to impacting academic freedom: the quality of most graduates of any teaching curriculum are judged by their performance on independently run testing systems: they are in a sense their own controls!* (Appendix11.i).

These feelings resonated with Thomas's (2012) argument that teaching professionals can do a better job at curriculum building when central government stays out of the picture. She contends that qualitative teacher professionalism is even more possible with localised support from stakeholders. Also, Parding, Abrahamsson and Berg-Jansson (2012) suggested that there may be an identity problem when a profession's and an organisation's respective logics meet, co-evolve, and sometimes clash, creating a continuous negotiation between the stakeholders, the professional ethos and the organisation (Parding, Abrahamsson and Berg-Jansson, 2012, p. 295). Solbrekke and Englund (2014) argue that in this world of political reforms and changing economic climates educational, reform is jeopardised by both international and national organisations in the quest for instant successes. They often impose rigid accountability measures on educators, which have a negative effect on educational practices. Until EAA/T is recognised as a profession, it does not have the protection of government scrutiny of college or university courses.

EAA/T needs governance and accountability to become a profession. It needs ethical standards and core values that could set boundaries and moral principles for best practice in the arena. Brown and Tebay (1997) maintained that the cardinal influences for professional EAA/T practice were professional standards, training and course accreditation (Literature Review, p. 19) Unfortunately these boundaries have often been breached or never achieved for several reasons one of which is financial gain. Lucey and Souba's (2010) work argued that commercialism, sets peoples' desires for maximum monetary gains ahead of need for quality outcomes of training programmes. McCuen and Gilroy (2011), argued that it is not uncommon for medical experts to be often more concerned with personal goals and monetary gain than they are about ethics. Morley's (2010) argued in her findings that when higher education becomes a sub-system of the economy with new professional priorities, it can interfere with educators spending time to build synergy with their students, or to encourage collaboration, critical thinking and with allowing multi-perspectives that lead to great achievements and professionalism.

5.3.5b Adoption

DEs collective consensus, INs and several FN responders suggested that it would not be easy to raise the bar for EAA/T training. They acknowledged that there are considerable

obstacles. EAA/T national organisations would find it difficult to adopt a new expanded future curriculum, as it could affect payments, student profiling and admission, course length and quality. It would be difficult to shift attitudes sufficiently when national organisations and academies are always in search of funding and are justifying the need to put quantity before quality. This leads to increased student intakes, and shortened courses that often negatively impact quality. (OC-Profile, and OCM, in Appendix 1.i; FGa, in Appendix 1.iii). If organisations and academies are not willing to invest in raising the bar for EAA/T and, current attitudes remain dominant then curriculum builders may be obliged to exclude basic topics, such as human-horse bonding, equestrian skills and horsemanship, all of which underpin EAA/T practice.

It is a fact that horse related topics require the academic world to access horse farms with infrastructures suited for teaching these facilities charge for the use of the horses, which are expensive to keep. If the academic world allows the curricular substructure to remain weak, it compromises occupational stability and reliability. When there is no career path, and professional licensing then there are no monetary incentives, for instance to pay educators and practitioners, and no chances of promotion. This means that everyone earns the same money regardless of prior qualifications, or abilities in the world of EAA/T. According to responses in Appendix1.i these are the obstacles to change for EAA/T students, educators and practitioners alike.

Another obstacle to change, according to an IN responder, is that human specialists might be replacing the foundation role of the horse in EAA/T. The horse was no longer defined as central to EAA/T practice and was being replaced by human specialists. The introduction of specialists using EAA/T as a treatment technique was causing occupational fractionalisation, which some experts argue is at odds with EAA/T's struggle to establish itself (Quote IN2, p. 153). McKenna, Keeney and Bradley's (2003) study compared the role of the specialist nurse to generic nurses in the British and Irish community and found that that the presence of specialist nurses who were up to date experts in their specific field, created role conflict, role confusion and role overlap with generic nurses, who had a broader current knowledge base in all areas relevant to practice, confusing the public and the clients. It could be said that the growth of specialist activities surrounding EAA/T practice can create the same conflict and confusion among stakeholders, the public and among clients. The status of non-specialised EAA/T

practitioner working with the horse could decline and affect negatively a client's decision to engage with EAA/T.

According to DEs to rise EAA/T from relative obscurity will require building a **new professional paradigm** (p. 160). This fits well with other sources for example, Júlíusdóttir's (2006) argument that in Europe social workers could only become recognised as professionals by making a paradigm shift in the context of the domain of their practice. Júlíusdóttir's (2006) articles reinforced this study's findings that until EAA/T has committed itself to an epistemological and paradigm shift from its current state it cannot build a new professional paradigm needed for stakeholders and for the public to engage with. As Júlíusdóttir (2006) argued EAA/T would have to face up to the challenge of reconstructing its past experiences, knowledge, professional integrity, visibility and power. According to Júlíusdóttir (2006), it is only a rich engaging qualitative process that will build increasing interest and evidence. By increasing theoretical knowledge, practice and research where emphasis can be put on a continuous interplay and integration of all three domains, will professional transformation take place. This is the paradigm shift.

According to other sources, in the 1970's when Occupational Therapy (OT) scholars and therapists provided richer descriptions of OT to the public, a giant professional leap was made, taking OT from an innocuous bedside activity into a prestigious profession (Rogers, 2005, p.73). Rogers (2005) argued that the erudite understanding of the OT allowed it to develop a new professional paradigm and become a profession. Keilhofner (2009) suggested changing to a professional culture by reshaping the understanding of the service, and providing OTs with a wider view of their clients' needs. Once there was professional clarity and the basic structure was understood, a professional paradigm was constructed embracing the element of culture, standards and best practice.

FG5 (p. 134) participants noted that evidence-based research could establish more trust in the service (Appendix 1.i), and establish EAA/T as a new professional paradigm (Brown, 2009) (Literature Review, p. 15). Riede (1988) argued that EAA/T had a long history of restoring peoples' health and wellbeing by taking advantage of equine uniqueness and non-invasive healing properties, however, according to Riede (1988) it is only recently that there is a global push for EAA/T to be evidence–based. Responders'

desire to professionalise EAA/T resonated with Brown's (2009) position presented when she addressed the issue of evidence-based research at a World Conference for Horses in Education (HETI). Brown (2009) proposed that it was essential for the future of EAA/T that practitioners participate in cooperative evidence-based research, **which she acknowledged is currently missing** (Brown, 2009). She argued that current EAA/T studies often did not meet the rigorous standards for inclusion into peer-reviewed magazines. Without evidence-based research there is stakeholder and medical practitioners trust in the will decline (p. 4, Appendix 19.i, 21.i, and 21.ii). Without a professional paradigm shift in opinions there is much less chance of reaching professional status.

Perhaps the closest EAA/T has got to possessing a professional paradigm was in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) when in the 1970's it was declared that therapeutic riding (EAA/T) was a physiotherapeutic service, which could be reimbursed by the Government insurance system (Literature Review, p. 35). Without a professional paradigm EAA/T as an evidence-based methodology will remain in the hands of the paramedical community or educational specialists, who can write academic articles about efficacy of treatments for children and adults with various challenges but do not provide statements about the richness of EAA/T, its unique methodology, the application skills and core values. For example, BunketorpKäll, Lundgren-Nilsson, Blomstrand, Pekna, and Nilsson (2012) researched the Effects of a Rhythm and Music-based Therapy Programme and Therapeutic Riding in Late Recovery Phase Following Stroke: A Study protocol for a Three-Armed Randomised Controlled Trial. Hauge, Kvalem, Berget, Enders-Slegers and Braastad (2013) researched Equine-Assisted Activities and The Impact on Perceived Social Support, Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy among adolescents. Unfortunately, these recent examples of EAA/T research demonstrated once again the capacity of the specialist and not the EAA/T practitioner. Most evidence–based research lack the richness and uniqueness of the job, or the educational and equestrian skills needed to practice EAA/T. Renker et al.'s (2012) statistical study of American EAA/T curricula was informative and gave an erudite understanding of the status quo in the USA however, it did not provide an argument for the richness of EAA/T or to attempt to establish a new professional paradigm. Currently a one-year diploma course does not offer enough time to encourage EAA/T students to learn how to participate in research, or write articles about their vocation. The courses are often superficial and merely scratch

the surface of subjects. This is the status quo in the new HETI EAA/T training course (HETI, 2014). After graduation practitioners witness and achieve many remarkable changes in their clients, but still do not write about the results. A new, future curriculum could provide EAA/T students with a motivating career structure and the skills needed to engage in research that include academic writing skills, and the ability to put ideas and experiences on paper for dissemination.

Until EAA/T experts and scholars choose to write about the underpinning structure of EAA/T and what is a legitimate training curriculum, EAA/T will remain an insignificant and disregarded profession, leaving the door open for other Participants. When scholars and therapists applied richer descriptions of occupational therapy (OT) in the 1970's the public encouraged and supported a giant leap forward, taking OT from an innocuous bedside activity into a prestigious profession (Rogers, 2005, p.73). Comparing EAA/T's development with that of occupational therapy, makes Rogers' (2005) argument that a new professional paradigm for occupational therapists helped them have a better understanding of their work, very compelling. Keilhofner (2009) further suggested that a professional culture shapes the understanding of the service among those providing the service and among those receiving it. According to Keilhofner (2009) the growth and development of the professional culture provided occupational therapists with a wider view of their clients' needs. Developing a professional paradigm could change EAA/T into a profession in its own right and most importantly build stakeholder confidence.

5.3.6 Summation Key Gaps / Area 1. Professional and Personal Development

Currently, EAA/T curricula are not keeping abreast of real-life issues within the field of EAA/T. A new level of professionalism is needed to promote a career path to build incentives for promotion and monetary reward. A spiral curriculum, build in a way that does not discourage those with passion and vocational dreams, could provide a career path for EAA/T practitioners that would open up many possibilities including secondary and tertiary academic degrees.

A raised level of governance could build standards, core values, quality control and performance levels suitable for a professional curriculum.

New training levels should aim for both educator and EAA/T expertise, supporting both the theoretical knowledge and its application by EAA/T practitioners. Professionalism could encourage EAA/T practitioners to conduct research and create the basis for an evidence-based practice. Finally, equestrianism and the horse must keep their rightful central place for all types of EAA/T practice.

5.4 Area 2. Acquisition of Knowledge

Categories with subcategories:

- **Acquisition of Knowledge**
  - Principles of Educational Practice
  - Experiential Learning
  - Student-Centred Learning and Supervised Practice
  - Educator Education
- **Equestrianism**
  - Equestrianism and certification
- **Pathologies and Manifestations**
  - Educators

The gaps in the curriculum affecting the acquisition of knowledge were found in educator training, student-centred learning, experiential learning, equestrian qualifications and pathologies and their manifestations. DEs and IN responders collectively recognised these gaps, and have spoken at length about raising the bar especially in the areas of equestrian skills and supervised practice (DEa, INd, in Appendix 1.vii; DEc, FGf, INe, in Appendix 1.viii). The words of the DEs and the desires of FG and IN responders resonated with Kaplan's (2010) work. Kaplan (2010) in his wish to upgrade the acquisition of skills and knowledge of the USA workforce, argued for knowledge and experience to achieve an equal standing. Kaplan (2010) argued that critical knowledge, in an acquisition context, is not only explicit knowledge, but also knowledge that resides in people's heads, their experiences and insights (tacit knowledge). This fits well with the critical knowledge requirements of EAA/T practitioners who are required to develop both explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge to achieve the desired outcomes of practice and to meet the needs of their clients.

DEs, FNs and IN participants suggested that EAA/T is a domain that requires students to become consciously competent in their ability to observe, think and thinking reflectively in the moment (p. 134). These responses resonated with the intuitive words of Bruner (1973) who argued that culture shapes our minds, providing a toolkit to help construct, not only our worlds, but also our self-concept. Bruner's (1973) words are insightful and provocative when looking at current conventional educational practices. He proposes that minds only reach full potential through perceiving, thinking, feeling and engaging in discourse. To achieve these qualities EAA/T students should be able to study in an atmosphere that encourages personal identity, meaning and purpose in the community they are about to serve. The environment should be able to instil values, passion and a love of learning. A learning environment for best practice requires educator expertise as well as self-confidence. In this culture, education could provide a variety of opportunities for conscious engagement in reality or potentially with therapeutic actual client/horse encounters.

5.4.1a Principles of Educational Practice

Collectively DEs' arguments for the opportunity to learn the principles of best educational practice concurred with responders from FG sand INs. Responders were concerned that there were not enough quality educators, and as FG7 responders claimed '*you end up learning on the job' (*Appendix 6.i). Other responders said they need trained trainers, people who could help them think how and why they are doing their work. These observations and words reverberate with Chickering and Gamson's (1987) Seven Principles for Good Practice in Education. Chickering, a distinguished professor and Gamson a sociologist, focused their attention on how teachers taught, rather than the content and subject matter being taught. They suggested the following principles for teachers to adhere to when teaching undergraduates:

- Encourages contact between students and faculty
- Develops reciprocity and cooperation among students.
- Encourages active learning.
- Gives prompt feedback.
- Emphasises time on task.

- Communicates high expectations.
- Respects diverse talents and ways of learning.

Chickering and Gamson (1987) recognised that content and pedagogy interact in complex ways, and argued that **what is taught** is as important as **how it is taught**. Chickering and Gamson suggested that students who involved themselves with college activities were generally more motivated. Other findings were that students learn best in groups, since learning in groups is both collaborative and social. Learning is not about sitting in class, listening **just to teachers, memorising pre-packaged information, and spitting out answers** (Chickering and Gamson, 1987). Students must relate to their learning experience, and then have an opportunity to apply it. Experiential learning makes it possible for EAA/T students to gain experience both in the classroom and outside the classroom, in the arena. Delphi responders suggested that EAA/T students must receive quality mentoring from expert educators (DEa-DEc, FGc, in Appendix 1.vii). Sentiments that are echoed by other sources such as Thomas, Baker, Pope, Latham and Mededji (2010) who argued that experiential learning must be carried out under the supervision of an experienced educator and be supported by the college or EAA/T training centre. The IBF International Consortium, (2013) in final report 'The Attractiveness of the Teaching Profession in Europe, European Commission for Education and Training, went so far as to say

> *that professionals in charge of mentoring student teachers for shadowing sessions require some form of certification, and thus training, preferably academic.* (The IBF International Consortium, 2013, p. 60).

In summary educators, should facilitate and support EAA/T students who desire to be taught how to work confidently in the arena with clients and horses. Professional and personal development is vital to any EAA/T staff and was stressed by participant practitioners, who easily vocalised gaps in current training. EAA/T academies could realise the desires of prospective EAA/T practitioners by providing a knowledgeable professional curriculum.

5.4.1b Embracing Experiential Learning

Throughout the Delphi Method participating experts created a powerful lobby to elevate the learning of EAA/T students so that they could deliver a high-quality service in the workplace. DEs, FGs and IN responders argued for greater emphasis on rendering positive outcomes for clients in real-life situations (SQ, p. 139, and FGa, FGb, DEe, INf, in Appendix 1.x). This reverberates with the work of Bacorn-Bastable (2008) who suggested that any future curriculum development should take advantage of practitioner strong opinions and try to understand why so many feel very strongly about up-skilling practitioners, to reach best practice.

Amongst the many strong opinions, reflective and critical thinking were regarded as necessary skills to upgrade the curriculum. However, there were but a few FG and IN responders, and DEs who actually mentioned the importance of experiential learning (DEb, DEc, DEf, FGa, in Appendix 1.x). When FG and IN responders were asked the component question, *'Should EAA/T curricula incorporate critical educational theories as well as proven practical paradigms from healthcare and education, PBL (Project - based Learning), AL (Active Learning), WBL (Work -based Learning)'* the response was somewhat muted as the participants were either unfamiliar with the terminology or did not know about the various pedagogic paradigms. At the end of the course EAA/T students used and recognised these alternative teaching strategies under the name of supervised practice. Whether the former, or the later, I found when posing the question to DEs, '*How do you think you should build a course to make students sufficiently curious and creative and feel good about themselves as they learn?'* that expert replies appeared to have a greater understanding of the need to incorporate educational theories in EAA/T training (Quote DE, p. 175).

Quote:Delphi Expert

'By visual, auditory, real case studies, by giving them exposure, hands on, and then having discussions, making it not all testing and evaluating.'

This sentiment correlated with the desire to see the EAA/T curriculum provide experiential learning students. Participants indicated on the SQ that their goals required that the curriculum give them opportunities to develop new skills (Appendix 2.iii and

2.iv) thus substantiating the findings about experiential learning (p. 46) that emerged from the research literature survey.

Embracing different types of experiential learning could enhance learning at different stages of the curriculum. In the early stages, it could provide various group experiential activities like role-play, problem-based learning (PBL), and active learning (AL) giving students opportunities to learn and build new skills through collaboration and communication with other members of the class. Towards the end of training experiential learning could be used to connect theory to authentic practice under supervision.

FNa and INa (in Appendix 1.x) and DE and SQ responders (Learning 3-therapy Skills, Appendix 2.iii and 2.iv) substantiated Kolb's (1984) theory about organisational learning. Kolb (1984) found that experiential learning paradigms supported the four stages of a learning cycle, *experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting* (Kolb and Kolb, 2005). Kolb and Kolb (2005) defined experiential learning as a process of constructing knowledge using the creative tension that has its origins in the four stages that respond to contextual demands (Kolb and Kolb, 2005). Kolb (1984) created his experiential learning theory (ELT) and his learning style inventory (LSI) and maintained that experiential learning works well when it is applied to education and adult development. Kolb's holistic model of ELT had its roots in the work of Dewey (1933) and Piaget (1972). Responder observations resonated with Dewey's, (1933) and Piaget's theories (1972). Dewey emphasised the importance of students' active learning and reflective learning if meaning was to be made during the learning process. Piaget argued that children learn through mental and physical actions (schemas) that help build an understanding of the world. Piaget believed that through adaptation and assimilation of new information knowledge is expanded. For the EAA/T prospective practitioner applying **experience, reflection, thought and action** in the classroom and in the arena with the horse will connect the human to the horse and will raise their knowledge bar considerably.

In round one, DEs ranked pedagogic paradigms in second place (Figure 4.7, p. 142). This high position and sense of priority was perhaps due to the recognition that it was important to practice. This reflects Rolfe's (2014) argument that reflective practice should not be just **reflective contemplation of practice** but reflection in the moment, during practice. Rolfe feels that until this is taken seriously, experiential knowledge will fail to

meet expectations (Rolfe, 2014). The DE findings resonated with Rolf's (1972) argument who proposed that learning is dynamic, and that learning takes place during successive stages of adaptation to reality. Further, Bruner (1960) argued that students construct new ideas or concepts based on their current knowledge (Literature Review, p.59). During experiential learning students construct knowledge in the moment from past experiences and current experiences.

In the first iteration, DEs ranked supervised practice (experiential learning) as EAA/T's most important topic with scores ranging between 97 and 100% (Table 4.7, p. 145). These scores resonated with other well-known sources. Kolb (1984), for example suggested that students require a substantial practical experience to construct knowledge. Kolb (1984) argued that knowledge has four elements: **concrete experience, observation and reflection, the formation of abstract concepts, and testing in new situations.** Distler's (2006) argument was that a curriculum must apply adult learning techniques to produce graduates with sustained competent practices and critical thinking skills. Distler (2006) asserts that an advance practical nursing curricula needs to ensure clinical competence and this requires both critical decision-making and diagnostic reasoning.

Although DEs' collective consensus in round three (98%) gave high ranking to supervised practice, no collective consensus was reached regarding the amount of time needed to gain expertise during supervised practice (Table 4.7, p. 145). From the responses given by participants there were many time variations, however, there was total agreement that quality supervision was paramount. Quality supervision ensures a safe and supportive environment in which students can build their own skills and insights, while reflecting on the core tenets of EAA/T practice and the holistic treatment service they are providing.

SQ responses ranked practical skills as the most important part of the EAA/T training programme (Figure 4.5, p. 139, Appendix 2.ii). This finding cross-matched with observations of DEs and IN and FG participants who were concerned that supervised practice should be an informative and transformative experience for students (Appendix 1.viii; Appendix 1.ix). These findings substantiated Mezirows' transformation learning theory (Mezirows, 1991, Literature Review, p.43). Some FG and IN responders noted that some supervised practice seriously lacked supervision. When FG7 participants were asked *Were the supervised practice properly supervised?* Together, there was a resounding NO and everyone was laughing. Example of elicited responses were,

> *I could just have come and written down the hours myself'. It is left in our hands, if you want to learn more you will go to clinics and study by yourself and teach yourself – You will become auto didactive* (FG7 in Appendix 6.i).

Students reported that they were relying upon themselves to decide what linked premises with conclusions, what the client needs were, and how and what horse assisted intervention should be chosen to improve the client's quality of life. These words were reinforced by FG7 participants and supported the findings of other researchers. Kolb (2005), for example, suggested that successful experiential learning sessions depend upon educator skills and a sense of responsibility emanating from the teacher. No student should be left to become an **auto-didact** during what should be supervised practice. Martin and Canon (2010) argued that when supervision fails, generally it is due to the lack of clarity about a supervisor's philosophy of clinical supervision. It is the contents of these beliefs that influence the supervisor's opinion about people and about practice. For EAA/T it would be the responsibility of educators/supervisors to gather prior knowledge of their students and their level of competency, which could affect, safety in a human/horse working environment. If gaps are discovered between the student's level of competence and the level that is actually needed for practice, it is the educator's/supervisor's responsibility to close these gaps.

The responders' strong feelings about supervised practice echoed endorse the findings of several other educational experts. Grant and Pomson (2003) and Kaplan (2010) regarded supervised practice as a significant method for developing expertise and skills, and found that supervision of practice safeguards and enhance the students' practical experience. Martin and Cannon (2010) argued that it is not only the qualities of the supervisor, but also the delivery and understanding of supervised authentic practice that is important. Darling-Hammond (2001) suggested that expert supervisors are the essence of practice opportunities and reflection for students. Mulhauser (2011) argued that supervision focuses on students learning and how the therapeutic process unfolds between them and their clients. EAA/T students should have the opportunity to enter practice gradually. Starting with co-planned EAA/T sessions, gives the student time to build observation powers and see how various kinds of problems are managed and solved.

5.4.1c Similarities between EAA/T and the Nursing Profession

From my experience working as a nurse in the UK, there are similarities between EAA/T and the nursing profession. Both jobs require the highest standards for practical training. EAA/T practitioners and nurses require these standards of training for safety reasons and because they are responsible for another person's life. It is essential for any practical training to provide both theoretical and practical knowledge and use the skills and techniques that are designed to improve a client's quality of life. EAA/T practitioners have to do that while their client is riding a horse in the arena.

Several FG7 responders were concerned that student EAA/T practitioners are uneasy about the overwhelming responsibility of taking care of a client, horse and sometimes many volunteers in an open arena. This resonated with the findings of Helminen, Tossavainen and Turunen (2014) who assessed the clinical practice of student nurses and found that student nurses were concerned about the responsibility they would have to carry as registered nurses. Helminen, Tossavainen and Turunen (2014) suggested that this concern is related to how a nurse measured her competence, and how he or she evaluated their own personal skills and development needs. I would suggest that there is more here than meets the eye. Once EAA/T students step into the arena and take charge of the session, their performance is scrutinised by clients, volunteers and families. The student is placed in the role of the all-knowledgeable leader. Therefore, EAA/T educators must have the knowledge to understand the problems of being in charge, and only allow an EAA/T student to enter the riding arena gradually. According to Phillips (1994) a professional liability officer, there is a special phenomenon that affects a nurse's practice. The overwhelming levels of accountability weigh-down the performance of nurses in charge. Once on duty they have a level of responsibility and accountability not matched in other professions such as nursing. *Nurses are entrusted with, are answerable for, take the credit and blame for, and can be judged within* (Phillips, 1994, p. 1). This level of responsibility and accountability could correspond to the legal and moral boundaries of EAA/T practice. This would be another reason why a new future curriculum is necessary. The EAA/T profession in general needs the support of governance, ethical standards and codes of practice.

Any EAA/T curriculum needs to provide experiential learning experiences, which for the EAA/T practitioner means **experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting** in the classroom, arena, with the horse, while connecting the human rider to the horse. It could provide different types of experiential learning under expert supervision (FG3, p. 179, FG3 in Appendix 5.i). During the time of the supervised practice, EAA/T students will learn how to plan, discuss and evaluate authentic sessions. Towards the end of the studies, EAA/T students can repeat these exercises but extend their experience under new supervision of mentors/ coaches/ supervisors. The new supervision further generates competence, decision-making skills and diagnostic reasoning. If experiential learning does not become part of an EAA/T curriculum by omission, it can create a gap.

Quote:FG3

'The true learning is in experiential learning, and you won't get it in the classroom and not on the video, and you are not going to get it through distance education'.

5.4.1d Student-Centred Learning / Supervised Practice

To make certain a new future curriculum is a transformative learning experience, future EAA/T training policy makers must ensure opportunities for educators to receive the necessary educational skills to facilitate learning and assessment of EAA/T students in their quest to become practitioners. Many educational psychologists have articulated transformative learning theories. Knowles (1950) tried to develop the conceptual base for andragogy. Freire (1974) argued that pedagogy should foster critical consciousness (conscientisation) amongst individuals and groups and Mezirow (1991) described his TL theory (Literature Review, p. 43) that emphasised critical thinking skills. According to Clark and Wilson (1991) transformative theories have three dimensions, **psychological** the changing of self, **convictional**, the revision of belief systems, and **behavioural,** the changing in life styles. The SQ data clearly evidenced student desires and goals regarding EAA/T training cross validating the professional principles of educational psychologists (Appendix 2.iv). A number of DEs suggested colleges should provide educators with knowledge of teaching adult learners. One DE in round two of the survey argued that educators should **not** enter classrooms without fully understanding how adult learners

learn (p. 141). These admissions substantiate Mezirow's (1991) TL theory (Literature Review, p. 43) and Toohey's (2011) Andragogical theory (Literature Review, p. 55).

However, there is much more to educating adult learners than just helping them understand the purpose, learning activity and product of their endeavours. EAA/T students, who are all adult learners, need to feel confident in their work experience and in their future real-life job (Appendix 2.iv). In practice educators need to rethink how they are going to teach EAA/T students' critical thinking skills as they must learn to think reflectively in action, relate to what they want to do and what they are doing. According to other sources, educators should be able to recognise the gap between what they think about education and the way they are carrying it out (Parra, Gutierrez and Aldana, 2014). Equally if an educator only believes in achieving maximum output and everything else goes by the wayside then a student's knowledge maybe restricted and below par (Rozycki, 1999). Segal (1998) and (Literature Review, p. 47), argued that often there is a distinction between a theory in use and a theoretical position taught in the classroom. Segal (1998) strongly supported learning a theory through its use.

EAA/T course educators should have the opportunity to be trained in andragogy, which is the method of teaching adults (p.55). Educators must go beyond conscious expectations of themselves in relationship to the way they respond to the demands of 'real-time' conditions for EAA/T students (adult learners) in both the classroom and the arena (Appendix 1.ii, and Appendix 1.iv). According to other sources, such as Argyris and Schön (1974), for teachers to be effective they must plan, implement and review their actions. EAA/T educators must become reflective thinkers if they are to expand a student's personal vision. If EAA/T students are internally motivated, self-directed and goal orientated then they can enrich the learning experience with a priori knowledge. According to another source, Dirkx (1998) reminded us not to forget that there are strands to the transformative theory that evolved from powerful images such as*:* **the professional teacher, therapist, and riding instructor.** An individual conjures up these images making more meaning from his learning experience. This process of meaning making increases self-awareness in the riding arena.

5.4.1e Educator Education

EAA/T educators should have an opportunity to become competent in their job (Appendix 1.ix). Currently, in Israel, the curriculum does not provide any training for EAA/T educators, creating conflict with an andragogy ideology (FGd, in Appendix 1.x). EAA/T educators are specialists who often grow into the role without any formal teacher education, which might be an obstacle to teaching. Personal characteristics of EAA/T educators will often determine the outcome and quality of their teaching. According to other sources, Bacorn-Bastable (2008) argued that teaching and learning environments are designed to provide educators with space and time to teach well. Adult educators can fail and become an impediment to learning and growth if they do not recognise the relationship between teaching pedagogies and student's transformation and desire for emancipation (Mezirow, 1991). Mezirow (1991) argued that there is an art of teaching adults effectively, which requires an understanding of various principles or theories of how adults learn, and how to apply some of those principles to practice. Sandlin, Wright and Clark (2011) argued that in order to teach adult learners, teachers must draft student personal characteristics, must harness student identities and cultural behaviours to avoid conflict with the role of the educator and with the learning process (Quotes: DE, p. 182).

Quote:Delphi Expert

'Teachers must have a high level of knowledge but also know how to manage students and how to pass on their knowledge'.

Quote:Delphi Expert

'It's not enough to know what you wnat to say, you should kow how to say it'.

To summarise, the creation of knowledge and acquisition of skills will depend upon the connections between the roles of the educator, his knowledge of student needs, his ability to adapt to the challenges posed by the different learning styles of his students, his experience, the codes of practice and the responsibility to motivate EAA/T students into a critical knowledgeable thinker during practice. Figure 5.3 below demonstrates the important components of any successful curriculum. All components are necessary for an EAA/T student to receive new knowledge and skills.

Figure 5.3 below represents components of an EAA/T curriculum, needed to motivate prospective EAA/T students to create knowledge and acquire the skills needed for practice. Linking themes, topics and methodology can meet the challenge of teaching adult learning and individual student needs.

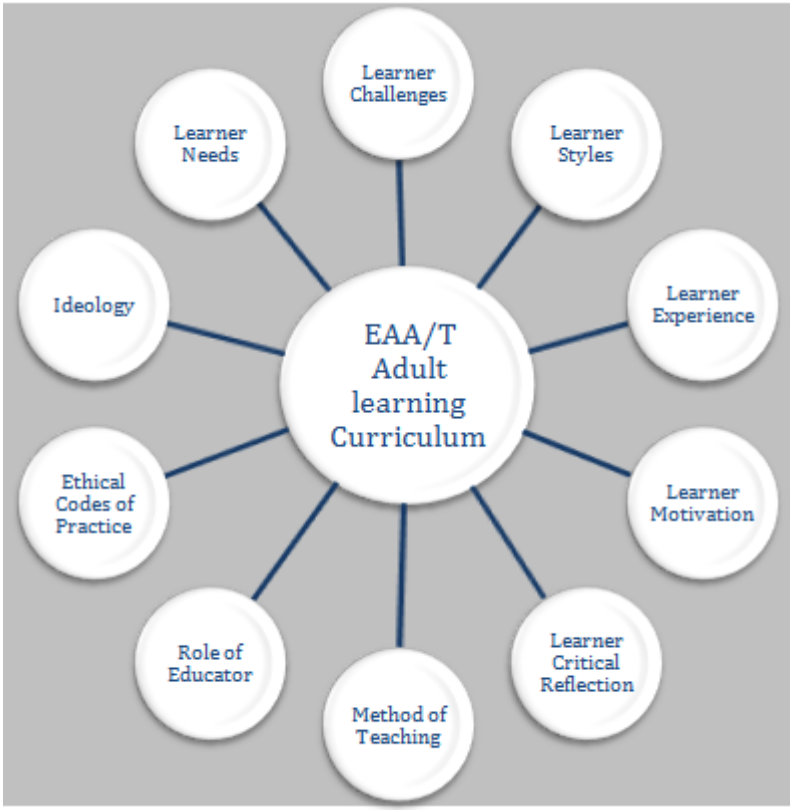

Figure 5.3: Motivational Components of an EAA/T Curriculum

5.4.2a Acquisition of Knowledge - Equestrianism

Ninety-four per cent (94%) of Delphi experts (p. 148) agreed collectively that equestrianism is one of the most important tools of any EAA/T curriculum. This agreement was cross-matched with the many responses from focus groups (FGs) and interviews (INs) where most responders declared that practitioners need equestrian skills for their work in order to build **human/horse connections.** Equestrianism was the common frame of reference for all participants regardless of cultural differences. Equestrian knowledge and skills were the topics that produced the highest degree of peer interactions and passionate discussion as participants were stimulated by the opportunity to speak their mind. (Quote FG6, p. 184, and FG7, p. 185 and 186) According to Kidd and Parshall (2000) participants often commented on each other's point of view, while

challenging each other's motives and actions in a pointed fashion. In discussions, there was not a lot of concession about equestrian knowledge and skills. Some stronger members of the FG 6 and 7 responders had no compunction in holding their ground and vigorously presented their own opinions that equestrian skills and knowledge was a must for every curriculum. When asked, '*what can the colleges do to fill the gap where there is a lack of equestrian?'* (FG7 in Appendix 6.i). Some FG7 responders replied *'Just do not accept anyone onto the course without equestrian experience or close the course'* (FG7 in Appendix 6.i). In these situations, the quieter members of the group kept their thoughts to themselves or were swayed by the vigorous responses of these outspoken members (FGf, INb, in Appendix 1.viii).

Quote:FG6

'I see the gaps - they are letting too many people without the horsey base into therapy'.

Some DEs argued that it took years to become a principled horseman and maintained it is an advantage for EAA/T practice if EAA/T students had the opportunity to explore their own experience with the horse so that they can develop a set of principles of correct training. EAA/T students could then identify horse behavioural disorders, which could affect a therapy session (DEg, QR2, in Appendix 1.vii). This finding resonates with Xenophon's work and with the humanistic model of the Scythians (Literature Review, p. 16) and with other sources. McGreevy and McLean (2007) for example maintained that building an understanding of equine ethology (the science of horse behaviour) enhances effective horse handling. Acknowledging the role of learning theories in human/horse interactions could prevent over-interpretation of equine responses to humans and ensure safety measures for horse, EAA/T practitioners and riders (Appendix 1.viii).

Most FG and IN responders recognise that the principles of training horses, the mastering of equestrian skills and horse care were crucial if a practitioner wanted to maximise his ability to work with a challenged rider in the arena. The IN4 interviewee was concerned that the horse, which was originally central to EAA/T development and has remained so until today in the German model (p. 35) is becoming lost from view in many other global models. The IN4 participant argued that all EAA/T practitioners including specialists should be **trained riding instructors with knowledge of horsemanship and horse care**

and management and human-horse bonding. Researchers such as Dewkett (2007) argued that equestrian knowledge and skills are fundamental to the principles of practice and the key to making EAA/T a successful non–invasive therapy technique.

Quote:FG7

'Riding Instructors (EAA/T) shoud not be thrown into the deep end. they need therapeutic skills and vision working with horses'.

5.4.2b Equestrianism and Certification

Equestrianism underpins any EAA/T curriculum, all fourteen original Delphi experts in round one and the remaining twelve in the final round of the Delphi expert survey, as well as all six-eight FG responders considered them a pre-requisite for admission (DEb-DEd, FG2, in Appendix 1.viii). FG7 responders declared that no student should graduate without an instructor level certificate in riding (FG7 in Appendix 6.i). Only one FG, who thought there was no need to emphasise horse care and management skills, suggested that if others (stable staff) prepared the horses and took care of them each day, there was little need for the EAA/T practitioner to be fully conversant with horse care and management topics. Renker et al. (2012) researched the current situation in the Path Intl organisation in the USA and found that 95% of EAA/T practitioners were certified at the lowest level (registered level) even though certification at higher levels was available. Renker et al., (2012) were concerned that EAA/T practitioners needed more opportunities to focus on horsemanship skills and more consideration of the horse and its interaction with humans in order to be effective practitioners. According to Renker, et al., (2012) Path International, USA attempted to refocus the requirements for certification by adding a checklist for horsemanship as a prerequisite as well as a mentor programme and an additional half-day workshop to the criteria for certification. Still these efforts as some DEs, FG and IN responders from the USA suggested did not alter the current situation where equestrian skills and teaching abilities were still insufficient (Appendix 1.viii). The responders remained convinced that the level for certification remained low in order to maintain high intakes of candidates and a high pass rate. Once again this was perhaps the manifestation of putting financial gain as a higher objective than quality of the graduating EAA/T practitioners (Literature Review, p. 40).

Many responders believed EAA/T was losing sight of its founding principles and that equestrianism is central to any EAA/T programme. Losing sight of equestrianism as an important component of available EAA/T curricula open floodgates allowing specialists to use the horse for treatments connected to their specialty, but who do not feel the need to become an EAA/T expert with equestrian skills. From my experience as practitioner for the last three decades, when the horse component is reduced to being simply another therapeutic tool, the harmony between practitioner/specialist, client and the horse is diminished and the healing process is retarded. From the study findings (Appendix 1.xiii) and the literature review (Figure 2.3, p. 37) EAA/T practitioners must acquire a sound knowledge of the horse to build a safe working environment in the arena. Sneidhacker (1997) suggests that *classical riding lessons* build harmony and unity in patients with borderline personality disorders. Pasquinelli and Papini (1997) argue that

> *…the complexity inherent in the application of therapeutic riding (EAA/T) requires personnel who are adequately prepared for both from the physical therapeutic point of view and from that of riding (riding instructor)"* (Pasquinelli and Papini, 1997, p. 91).

Unfortunately, on a global scale EAA/T managers are demanding less and less equestrian expertise in order to manage costs and graduates enter the arena with a serious lack of equestrianism (INb, FGb, in Appendix 1.viii, Quote FG7, p. 185). This was substantiated by the Renker et al. (2012) investigation and most recently the new and disappointing HETI Instructor model, level one (HETI, 2014). The EAA/T practice required that EAA/T practitioners have a solid repertoire of equestrian skills. Such skills are needed for safety reasons and for the facilitation of the client-horse relationship.

Quote:FG7

'People should only learn from people who have been living and breathing with horses'.Teachers must have a high level of knowledge but also know how to manage students and how to pass on their knowledge'.

5.4.3a Acquisition of Knowledge: Pathologies and Manifestations

Today, EAA/T practitioners in many courses receive only an introduction to different pathologies and possible manifestations. This prevents researching the necessary level of

competence in the working environment where the practitioner is supposed to provide equine assisted activities and therapy to improve the client's wellbeing. It was noteworthy to find that DE collective responses cross matched with the responses of FG and IN and responders with researchers such as Titchen and McGinley (2003) when they found that EAA/T practitioners need knowledge of pathologies, their manifestations and psychology to build meaningful therapeutic interventions for best client centred practice. EAA/T interventions are treatment plans that have embedded clinical strategies, which require multiple practitioner skills (Appendix 16.i). DEs, along with a number of FG and IN participants, felt that current curricula often fell short of the level of theoretical knowledge needed for building an effective intervention. Their training only provided a superficial knowledge of pathologies and their manifestations (INb, INe, FGe, FGG, in Appendix 1.ix)**.** One FG7 responder suggested that many curricula lacked sufficient exposure to mental health and learning disabilities. This led to a lack of expertise in psychological and social problems, and, therefore, ultimately to interventions that did not address the client's needs. Major medical insurance companies in Israel reimburse parents of children diagnosed with neuro developmental dysfunctions for the cost of EAA/T programmes they engage with and require progress reports. When Israeli researchers did not include EAA/T practitioners in the research they related the EAA/T practitioner performing the role of horse handler (Literature Review, p. 27).

Deepening content knowledge to include an understanding of the manifestations of pathologies treated with EAA/T interventions could raise the quality of the service. The IN1 interviewee argued that it is not enough to understand a diagnosis, it is important to know how a child or adult is affected by the disability. IN1 along with DEs, IN3 and the SQ responders argued that a practitioner needs content knowledge that could be accessed and deployed in a moment in the arena. EAA/T practitioners need content knowledge to plan EAA/T sessions, building a client's therapeutic goals and objectives for the arena session (Appendix 2.iii, and Appendix 2.iv).

DEs and the IN1 interviewee and some responders from FG, suggested that more theoretical education of pathologies and their manifestations was needed, but that it was also crucial that EAA/T students be taught how to use this knowledge to build human/horse interventions (DEe, DEf, in Appendix 1.viii). Understanding a client's challenges, and how that specific pathology affects them at that moment in time should

be part of the professional knowledge base. These findings mirror Higgs and Titchen (2000) findings that a:

> *Professional knowledge base, is 'essential for professional reasoning and decision-making* (Higgs and Titchen, 2000, in Higgs and Jones, p. 171).

Unfortunately, clients are often referred to EAA/T by medical practitioners with a diagnosis and very little recorded information about the pathology's manifestations. Often practitioners must use their own observation and enquiry skills to determine the manifestations of several disabilities that challenge their client. I suggest that this makes it even more crucial that EAA/T students receive a solid knowledge base of pathological manifestations.

A Nursing Example

From the nursing profession where patients expect nurses to be able to identify their problems and to know the best ways to solve them we can draw parallels to the EAA/T practice. According to Jones and Cowie, (Jones and Cowie in Corrigan, Dillon, and Gunstone 2011) and Palese Saiani, Brugnolli and Regattin (2008) diagnostic reasoning generates a spontaneous thinking process designed to identify problems, and has become a professional tool in nursing education. Duthie, Drew, Hughes, Farouk, Hodson, Wedgwood and Monson (1998) researched how long a nurse practitioner needed to train before she or he could become an independent sigmoidoscopist. Their findings revealed that a nurse practitioner had to have thirty-five observations, thirty-five withdrawals, and thirty-five supervised full procedures. After the completion of this programme 215 patients had been examined independently by the nurse practitioner. The results showed that after the training 93% of the nurse practitioners successfully completed the course (Duthie et al., 1998). Perhaps EAA/T training providers should consider this training method and apply it to EAA/T student training.

5.4.3b Acquisition of Knowledge: Pathologies, Manifestations - Educators

When we evaluate the EAA/T curriculum, content matters! Not only current knowledge about a given pathology and its manifestations, but also treatment alternative (Jones and Cowie, in Corrigan, Dillon and Gunstone, 2011). FG7 participants (Appendix 6.i) were

concerned that there were not enough EAA/T educators who had acquired the complex understanding of working with disabilities in the arena. According to their knowledge there were only five centres in Israel that could work with severe disabilities. Their observations resonated with arguments presented by Jones and Cowie (2011) that students require the best evidence-based knowledge of disabilities in order to be able to make the best choice of a safe and successful intervention.

In **Competency-based Education,** Toohey (2011) argues that there is no split between theoretical and applied knowledge as theory is taught in the context of the areas where it can be applied according to the dictum: knowledge informs action (Literature Review, p. 55).

To summarise, our graduating EAA/T practitioners must leave their training programmes with a secure base in pathologies and their manifestations. Any EAA/T curriculum required a foundation in pathologies and their manifestations as well as a repertoire of appropriate therapeutic interventions. In practice EAA/T practitioners must make judgments about their client's challenges and the EAA/T praxis prescription. In order to do this well, EAA/T practitioners need training in critical thinking skills to support the classification of the client's challenges and to select a proper course of action.

5.5 Area 3. Incorporation of Pedagogic Paradigms

Subcategories:

- Problem-based learning
- Active learning

Incorporation of theoretical skills and applied learning techniques has been around for many years in education (Literature Review, p. 46). However, as mentioned previously many responders were unfamiliar with pedagogic paradigms, even though many suggested that critical thinking skills and reflective learning were important. DEs in the first iteration suggested that it was very desirable for students to have a substantial supervised practicum component. One expert suggested

> *…you need hands on experience (experiential learning) to be able to apply skills and methods in a real situation.* Others wrote:

Quote:Delphi Expert

'Reflection in action and subsequent problem solving is one of the distinguishing characteristics for successful instructors in this field". Experiential learning, could give EAA/T students time to reflect upon client's challenges and manifestations and how they could plan a treatment strategy in the safety of a social dimension in the classroom'.

Quote:Delphi Expert

'...about critical thinking, observation, reflection etc. You have to have those in order to utilize any of these methods (EAA/T). the bottom line is that you need hands on experience (experiential learning) to be able to apply skills methods in a real situation'.

These observations are in accordance with arguments put forwards by researchers who are convinced that employing student-led practical sessions will develop students' critical thinking skills (Bethell and Morgan 2011). Palese, Saiani, Brugnolli and Regattin (2008) who investigated the impact of nursing tutorial strategies in different educational settings found that nursing students in laboratory settings could reflect upon and discuss in detail a simulated patient's case history. Jones and Turner (2006) used realistic scenarios and questioning where the students were expected to provide solutions. Kirschner, Sweller and Clark (2006) maintained that experiential learning involves actual student involvement in contrast to mere cognitive activities reported on by teachers. Incorporating pedagogic paradigms that require reflections on action or during action in the moment of practice could build strong multi-tasking skills that are necessary for EAA/T practice.

5.5.1a Problem-based Learning (PBL)

Throughout the three iterations of the Delphi process, 95% of DEs valued some form of experiential learning. One DE argued that problem-based learning offered students the chance to observe, think critically and reflect all component actions that make up the foundation of efficient teaching and progressive therapy (DEf. Appendix 1.x). Another DE suggested *'they must do the basic introduction to therapeutic riding (EAA/T) – I think we are trying to make them conscious incompetents. They will know when they are out of their depth. They must know enough to recognise when they need help'***.** (DEb. Appendix1.x). Another DE argued there should be a very strong emphasis on PBL in any future curriculum because it encourages students to act/think/work, which are the most

important skills of any practitioner. She believed that course educators should receive training to work with pedagogic paradigms. In the first iteration of the Delphi Survey PBL received the highest score of considered pedagogic paradigms (79%). DEs commented as follows:

> *I think that students need help to integrate the theoretical knowledge with the practice through teaching strategies. It is extremely important to do the connection* (DEb, in Appendix 1.xi).

These findings correlated with those of FG and IN participants and with the desires of EAA/T students collected with the help of the SQ (Appendix 1.x). According to Palese et al. (2007) classroom activities could teach students about disabilities, evaluate their accuracy of diagnostic reasoning, as well as determining the validity of their responses, which Barrows and Tamblyn (1980) believed maintains students' motivation towards learning and develops student responsibility and professionalism.

Dewey (1938) gave perhaps the earliest description of PBL, when he wrote in his book Experience and Education that experiential learning helps students become competent learners. Later in the 1960's, PBL became a popular pedagogic paradigm in medical education where it emphasised a hypothetical-deductive reasoning process. PBL is a discovery-learning paradigm where students are presented with a problem related to EAA/T practice. Students are encouraged to work through a problem without receiving content information. The leaning becomes active, part of a discovery process, which should be worked through. PBL - encourages purposeful reasoning and goal directed thinking problem solving, formulating inferences and calculating likelihoods, in a thoughtful and effective decision- analysis process.

Quote:Delphi Expert
'...Without reflection there can be no depth to evaluationand without evaluation there can be no client-centred progress'.

Other sources, such as Barrows and Tamblyn (1980) and Hmelo-Silver, Duncan and Chinn (2007) argued that a learning environment for professionals is often a constructed practical learning approach that provides students with an extensive knowledge base of

learned strategies, and self-directed learning skills. Loyens, Rikers and Schmidt (2009) maintained that PBL becomes an effective pedagogical technique, as it shifts from rule learning, a classical teacher-centred method of teaching, where the teacher presented rules extracted from a set of observations, to a constructivist epistemology of collaboration, solving problems, reflection upon experiences, and engaging in self-directed inquiry. Kumar and Kogut (2006) looked at Student's Perceptions of Problem-Based Learning during teacher development. They conducted a small-scale study of twenty-five students enrolled in the Cognitive Processes and Problem-Solving class at the Polytechnic Institution in Singapore. Feedback was gleaned from students' reflective journals. They reported that PBL was a positive and significant change from conventional frontal teaching, where teachers merely overload them with information. Further Loyens, Remy, Rikers and Schmidt (2009) maintained that PBL was an excellent way to build students intrinsic motivation to learn. Bethell and Morgan (2011) maintained that it was an excellent method to fully engage students, while giving them confidence about their critical knowledge and skills.

However, Kirschner, Sweller and Clark (2006) suggested that if constructive learning is minimally guided, then it simply does not work for more than a very small percentage of advanced students and subject matter experts (Literature Review, p. 47). Kirschner et al. (2006) argued for more strongly guided methods to maximise learning for most students, which includes demonstrations of problem solving strategies accompanied by hands on practice exercises with authentic problems, and immediate feedback on mistakes, all necessary components to maximise the learning of most students. The combined effect of both teacher and student-centred learning as mentioned in the literature review (p. 46) would be useful for teaching how to cope with rules of safety, horses and equipment combined.

Kumar and Kogut (2006) and Loyens et al. (2006) suggested that in PBL environments educators must make key aspects of expertise visible through questions that scaffold student learning via modelling, teaching, and eventually fading some of their support. This approach resonates with Wood, Bruner and Ross's theory (Literature Review, p. 60). In a PBL environment disciplinary strategies can be made explicit in students' interactions with the tasks and tools available to them (Hmelo-Silver, Duncan and Chinn, 2007). One DE suggested EAA/T was holistic and had to be taught in that way. This

resonates with the argument put forward by Jones and Turner's (2006) small-scale study *Teaching Coaches to Coach Holistically: Can Problem-based Learning (PBL) help? Physical Education and Sports Pedagogy* in which they found that PBL was a way to teach coaches to coach holistically and facilitate the development of mind clarity so that students were better equipped to problem solve, a critical success factor for EAA/T practice. Rather than simply following a *how to* set of instructions, there is general agreement that the dynamic and intricate nature of coaching requires teaching, guiding and managing others, as well as creating a mind and skill set.

5.5.1b Active Learning (AL)

When ninety-five percent (95%) of DEs collectively agreed with the concept of some form of experiential learning, many were thinking of active learning (AL). They were convinced that EAA/T students must do more than just listen. They should focus on questioning and problem solving (FGB, in Appendix 1.x). This resonates with Bonwell and Eison's (1991) paradigm of AL, where students would work together, collaborate, and discuss the problems their clients are challenged by, while role-playing or engaging in the case study. AL differs from PBL, as it does not require students to engage in the discovery processes that focus on problem solving, and find a way to work it through. In the classroom, the two paradigms can overlap, depending on the learning need.

AL is engaging and constructivist and includes a wide range of activities that share the common element of involving students in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing (Bonwell and Eison, 1991). All responders were keen to see EAA/T students engaged in active learning strategies both in the classroom setting and in the field. FG, IN and DEs participants (Appendix 1.x) talked about role-play, which is taking place in collaborative groups, a team in the classroom or the horse and team outside in the arena, this resonates with the findings of Eison (2010) and Kuh (2008) who maintained that learning to work in groups builds listening abilities.

FG and IN participants suggested that active learning strategies could help students to understand the tasks and skills they will need for practice. AL like PBL helps develop a deeper meaning to practical situations ahead. AL offers EAA/T the opportunity to have

immediate feedback from the educators and experienced practitioners (INd, in Appendix 1.x).

Today, there are several new tools for active learning; the Internet and the information highway, social networks, phone SMS and probably more. All these tools can create a seismic shift from teacher-centred learning to active student-centred learning. Fay, Selz and Johnson (2005) members of the nursing faculty at the University of Texas, USA, constructed a pedagogical model of **Active Learning in Nursing Education** (ALINE). Fay, Selz and Johnson (2005) decided to take an active learning approach using the Internet and found that this captured and maintained students' interest. This method of AL was extremely motivating and led to the creation of knowledge as the students were active participants who valued their participation in the group activity. The Fay, Selz and Johnson (2005) approach supported Bonwell and Eison's (1991) assumption that AL provides students with opportunities to access their own prior knowledge and add personally meaningful solutions to the manifestations of the pathology. EAA/T students as a group enjoyed retrieving information and reported increased self-confidence levels (SQ Goal Expectations – Course General, in Appendix 2.iv).

5.6 Area 4. Fusion and Integration

This last theme to be discussed, is in many ways the most important as it encapsulates all the other themes and holds the future success of an EAA/T curriculum in its balance. There are gaps in the curriculum if it lacks experiential integration and knowledge transfer by experts in the fields of EAA/T, equestrian, education and medicine. The bar is lowered in terms of investment, performance, productivity and market value. When I asked the question: **Are EAA/T curricula sufficiently recognised and integrated with other educational and medical professions in a way that enables EAA/T practitioners to provide a holistic approach?** I wanted to know if EAA/T students were getting a balanced programme that provided both expertise and experience. Some FG and DE participants recognised the value of working alongside specialists and believed we should try to move out of our isolation, while others were concerned that specialists would put pressures on practitioners in the arena. Still FG and IN participants and DE experts recognised that theoretical knowledge must be entwined with authentic practice and that effective teaching and learning must go hand in hand (DEa, DEf, in Appendix 1.xi). They

admitted that EAA/T students should receive as many skills as possible from health, education and equestrian experts before graduation (FGa, FGc, FGp, in Appendix 1.xi). This finding echoed the desires of EAA/T students (SQ Goals and Expectations, in Appendix 2.i, Appendix 1.vii, Appendix 1.xiii). Other researchers such as Kaplan (2010) argued that it is imperative:

> *to find and apply expertise leading practices and learned lessons -- to achieve consistency in both policy and process understanding and execution across operational areas* (Kaplan, 2010, p. 40).

Pasquinelli (2009) in her paper Organisation and Application of an Integrated Model for Therapeutic Riding Treatment, suggested that specialist input improved the EAA/T client objectives. When a patient is referred from the hospital for EAA/T the medical specialists who are known to have an expertise in EAA/T can verify the indication, programme goals and evaluate the therapeutic progress and success. This collaboration between the hospital and EAA/T centre, the quality of the continuous communication between the hospital staff of experts and the EAA/T practitioners ensures consistency of objectives and results and interpretation of clinical/rehabilitative changes. Pasquinelli et al. (2009) described this operational model as a circular intervention, which underscores the role played by each service.

Once again when comparing EAA/T practitioners' achievement levels to those of nurses, it could be said that if EAA/T practitioners like nurses who attend a poorly designed training programme would be lacking personal expertise (McHugh and Lake, 2011, Literature Review, p. 42). Equally, like nurses if EAA/T students receive lectures that are so far advanced that they may have gone beyond the level needed for practice, they will not be able to create the knowledge needed for practice (Chavasse, 2001). Other researchers such as Reingold, Rimor and Kalay (2008) argued that education fails when theoretical foundations of teaching are not integrated with the reality of teaching, making programmes largely unsuccessful when theory is not related to pragmatic practice.

DEs and several FG and IN participants suggested that the gaps between theory and practice were widening (DEa-DEf, FGa-FGf, INa-INf, in Appendix 1.xi). I proffer as a course educator that there are several reasons why this could be happening:

a. EAA/T educators come from different disciplines and present lectures about their specialty but are unable to relate the information to EAA/T practice as they were not generally familiar with horse related skills and EAA/T practice (FG6 Appendix 1.xiv).
b. Many educators still carry the belief that subject matter and skills have already been worked out, and that they are static and therefore they just need to transmit the information to the docile student who basically can get all the information he or she needs from books or the Internet (TCM model, Literature Review, p. 52) To engage in or develop learning strategies that can facilitate the formation of knowledge by students and solve problems during experiential practice to remains foreign to many EAA/T educators. If EAA/T students are given the skills and information to synthesise topics like developmental psychology and cognitive psychology into practical situations (Goal Expectation Type b-Learning, 2 Therapy-theory, Appendix 2.iv methodology), the theory becomes alive and far more meaningful.
c. Some EAA/T educators believe EAA/T students are competent enough to manage a course without support. According to other sources, Fuller and Chalmers (1994) this is not an uncommon thought. They argued that educators often believe college students should have gained enough competencies during their earlier school years so that they should be able to manage independently once they are in college.
d. Some educators teach topics especially in supervised practice and do not require quality of performance. For instance, an educator can teach how to mount and dismount disabled people from horses. Watching the students repeat the exercise, faults are noticed, but are not corrected.
e. Theoretical lectures are often given months before the practicum begins. If a curriculum teaches theory one year and practices during the second year it is not realistic to believe that students can remember all of what they learned the previous year. Other researches such as Darling-Hammond (2001) argued that students are put in a situation where they are supposed to implement something they have never seen in practice. Bruner's (1983) reflections upon human education suggest that we are the only species that deliberately educates in environments other than where the learning is applied.

Recognising that theoretical application of a topic is crucial, and provides an ideal platform for consolidating theory. Delphi responders suggested much could be lost if

information is not passed on. One expert wrote that application of theory, real time experience in the arena and practice are the only way to understand the fundamentals of riding and treatment (DEb, in Appendix 1.viii). Another expert argued that it did not matter how much knowledge EAA/T students receive if not given the skills and confidence to build their own knowledge from it, it will not be effective. These observations supported Smith's (2000) curriculum theories (Literature Review, p. 51). Describing the praxis curriculum model Smith argued that an educator must be capable of setting out a principled action plan and facilitate conversations between self and students, which evolve into informed and committed action. He went further and suggested that the curriculum is a process, not just a physical thing, but also an interaction between teachers and knowledge, which require critical thinking and an understanding of what is expected of his or her role. Other researchers such as Reingold, Rimor and Kalay (2008) maintained that educators who put an emphasis on the acquisition of techniques and skills and neglect education and social goals:

> *Consequently, fail to develop a clear representation of the broad significance of teaching, the complexity of the profession and the enormity of required knowledge* (Reingold et al., 2008, p. 140).

Most responders implied that an EAA/T curriculum can and should be a transformative experience. Students change to become practitioners they move from the theoretical world to the management of a client's individual treatment plan. A practitioner cannot start a session without knowing what is wrong with the person and how it is affecting them (Appendix 16.i). This finding supported Toohey's (2011) argument that students have to find out, *'the way the world works and the way we operate in it'.* A curriculum requires a method of bridging the gap between *theory and practice* (Toohey, 2011 p. 70). If EAA/T has a sound base in the theory of practice, then according to researchers such as Darling-Hammond (2001) it can provide tools and techniques necessary for practice. Tools for EAA/T practice represent information, education, observation and skills that connect human challenges and pathological manifestations to the horse, equine activities and therapy to achieve a significant healing process in all environments (Appendix 1.xi).

Figure 5.4 below, represents two different areas of EAA/T, **theory and practice**. Theory is intended to explain and inform the EAA/T student about the available knowledge and

skills and guide him through practice where he can apply what his has learned. If theory is not connected to practice via the training curriculum, then EAA/T students may not be able to apply their new knowledge to practice. Practice will be abandoned or at best will not be an informed practice.

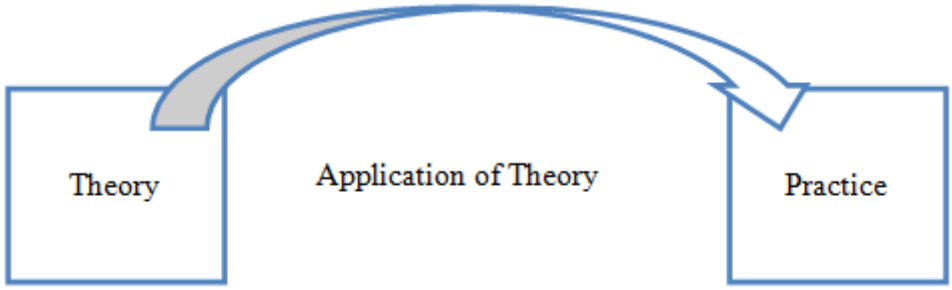

Figure 5.4: From Theory to Practice

The application skills required to transfer theory into practice often comes in different forms, but whichever form is used, it should be up to date and provided by the best of teachers and trainers, usually from a professional person. The application of EAA/T theory should relate to practice. Skills are constantly evolving and up to date, especially if evidence -based research begins to enter the field (LoBiondo-Wood, Judith Haber 2013). FN and IN participants and Brown (2009) all suggested that it would be easier to provide explicit applications to practice if EAA/T became an evidence-based profession providing research, which supports practice. Brown (2009) suggested that EAA/T students and practitioners would be reassured that their vocational practice was not just a myth, but also a worthwhile profession.

Theoretical application could remain as a major gap in the EAA/T curriculum if educators remain concerned with hypotheses or fundamental principles rather than concrete problems. According to other sources, Orland-Barak and Yinon (2007) argue that this creates a weak connection between theory and practice causing students to suffer and ultimately has a damaging effect on their future work in the arena. Orland -Barak and Yinon (2007) were convinced that an overall lack of coherent theoretical matter and a lack of articulation by educator preparation programmes provide little time for reflection and for engaging in practical tasks.

A number of FG responders, who are working in the field supported Orland-Barak and Yinon's (2007, p. 958) argument that students wanted to have a *'toolbox of ideas and*

activities to survive their initial induction activities' (FGe, FGf, in Appendix 1.xi (Quote FG7, p. 199). Another source, Darling-Hammond (2010), speaking about other professions argued that effective teaching strategies aid expert educators to build a repertoire of ideas, which can be passed on to students making them high calibre professionals in the industry.

Quality-teaching skills and strategies strengthen the curriculum by encouraging the growth of intrinsic motivation in a positive learning environment. However, this becomes a dilemma for educators who must decide whether they keep the skills taught to the minimum or whether they should they bare all (Orland -Barak and Yinon 2007). The findings show that EAA/T students need both a full repertoire and opportunities for creative thinking. Students need to be given the choice. Once qualified, students will discover that the job requires safety and organisation as well as abstract thinking and conceptualisation of situations that take place in the arena (Appendix 1.xi).

Other sources suggested that the theoretical application was more than just the tool box, it required educators to balance content knowledge with teaching theory while moving between understanding the topic and making it coherent for student tasks (Steele, 2005; Long, 2004). Steele (2005) was convinced that without educator expertise coordinating knowledge with student reasoning, it is inconceivable for clients to benefit (Steele, 2005). Guskey (2002) Wang and Sarbo (2004) and Kay (2006) suggested that any noteworthy curriculum requires coherent dynamic (positive, full of new ideas) educators who can relate theory to practice through good teaching skills and progressively widen the scope of learning situations (encouraging an environment for self-direction, self-actualisation and lifelong learning skills via effective teaching strategies as found in the process model.

Quote:FG7

'a lot of young instructors are afraid to start dealing with things at work as they feel they have not got enough tools

To summarise, theory places the context and the **why** into the practice. It acts as a guide for EAA/T students to understand practice. The application of theory drives good practice. It creates a set of guiding principles for praxis.

5.7 Delphi Method, Relating the Research to Current Thinking

This qualitative research enabled me to connect directly with current thinking. It provided on-the–spot interpretation of peoples' feelings, thoughts and observations. Individual interpretations of reality where the knower and the known are interactive and inseparable (Tsai, 2009) provide an opportunity to benchmark concept–indicators, shared facts and proposals for action that would become visible during discussions, interviews and surveys. Although I could have considered other possible approaches, the Delphi Method, as a systemic forecasting method, appeared to be best suited for data interpretation. It engaged with curriculum reality and formed the debatable theoretical constructs, which could then be transferred to any curriculum in support of future instruction (Randi and Corno, 2009).

Before the research began in 2009 there was a constant veiled agreement amongst colleagues and practitioners both here in Israel and globally that there should be a revision of the EAA/T curriculum in order to raise the bar. EAA/T educators had only been able to make some partial adjustments in various singular locations, but nothing concrete materialised (Castellan, 2010). Discussing this problem of EAA/T with my peers and supervisors at the University of Derby UK encouraged me to engage in this research. I am convinced that I made the right choice of research, which fitted well with current thinking.

Delphi, as a constructivist methodology, generated knowledge and meaning from interactions in which participants relayed their personal experiences. Delphi, as a process, provided an opportunity to emphasise the appropriateness of what should be EAA/T *'social norms, roles and institutions'* (Scheele, 2002, p. 49). As a constructivist paradigm it connected me, the practitioner and researcher, to the entire EAA/T global curriculum and how it came into being, its current performance, which includes the totality of students' experiences within the educational process and ultimately enabled me to suggest issues requiring reformation.

The Delphi Method focused on real time EAA/T issues, which came from practitioners, and expert educators. Through their participation, key issues and gaps embedded in the EAA/T curriculum were exposed. Achieving a wide perspective required engaging with

experts and educators globally who provided differing outlooks and approaches to EAA/T training. Only a research method like Delphi is able to absorb this holistic perspective while challenging me, as the researcher, to move through experiences of analysis construction and reconstruction of practice reality to reach my goal. The Delphi process linked prior external theoretical knowledge to survey building. It drew upon beliefs and ideas, which were tested, retested and refined. As a methodology using multiple sources of external theoretical evidence and stakeholder observations it brought me into conflict with my own reality and moved me between reflection and action, feeling and thinking into a new and emancipatory reality (Kolb and Kolb, 2005).

5.8 Critique of Methodology

The extensive **evidence** derived from the qualitative data collected suggests some foundational "truths" about curriculum gaps (Castellan, 2010). Getting information from the **horse's mouth** was the best way to understand what is required from an EAA/T practitioners' study in terms of work experience and expertise.

The informality of focus groups and interviews encouraged sometimes very noisy discussions that became too personal, as participants digressed and focused solely on their local experiences. Having a prearranged set of focus group interview questions may have limited individual responses but did uncover implied thoughts and feelings present during the interview. During the discussions windows opened to the innermost corners of the practitioner soul.

The Delphi Method was able to sweep-in rich sources of experiential data, which was passionate, inspirational and evident. However, the experiential data could be considered fallible and misleading as it was subdivided multiple times, and perhaps could have been subdivided even further, making it impossible to say with absolute certainty that the **key findings** represented the core issues researched (Mitroff and Turoff, 2002). Further Delphi experts presumed that multiple levels of communication and especially expert communications are all that is needed to uncover the issues, and that the collective consensus reached is an adequate way of discovering the truth. It may be necessary to make further, enquiries before EAA/T curriculum providers, or stakeholders consider

collective consensus as a strong position on **the nature of the problem**. (Mitroff and Turoff, 2002).

The rigour of this research remains solely with me as the researcher. Ideally other trained researchers should reach the same conclusion upon analysing the same data. Rigour has required me to give an accounting of the status quo of EAA/T independently of my work as a practitioner and educator in the system. Applying different strategies, like the use of scaling with the help of Likert scales, added an additional level of coherence to data assessment. Furthermore, the data and findings were analysed by me and by critical friends among my peers to ensure the correct interpretation of the data and to ensure that the findings are presented clearly. As a qualitative research approach, the Delphi Method is an epistemologically coherent paradigm, and therefore always open to dispute because there are those who only believe in a quantitative, more scientific approach.

5.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter answered the core question, ‘what is equine assisted activities and therapy (EAA/T), where we are now”, and “where would be like to be in the future”? It confirmed gaps in several areas of the curriculum that could prevent its educative mission to train EAA/T practitioners and meet clients’ needs. It reported important messages of past EAA/T pioneers and current practitioners who argued for continuous quality improvement and public accountability. It reflected the opinions of many other sources, and substantiated the findings by evaluating them against criteria put forward by eminent educationalists and psychologists.

To ensure a robust argument a process of triangulation was used to compare and cross-match the DE collective consensus with other insights used in the Delphi Method. The findings confirmed that new training policies and quality controls could prevent further sidestepping of standards and core values, an essential for any professional curriculum. It recommended a new curriculum design, and provisions for expert and EAA/T students’ professional and self-development. The knowledge bar is too low for EAA/T practitioners to provide the quality therapy and horsemanship that are commensurate with the job. Until these curriculum gaps will be closed public understanding of the uniqueness of EAA/T could remain out of reach.

In the next chapter conclusions and recommendations are made that justify the aim of the study. They will relate to the aims of the research and suggest how the findings can support EAA/T in the future.

Chapter Six

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion and Recommendations

Any new curriculum must connect to real-life issues within the field of EAA/T, which means connecting to operatives, operators, and clients. The challenge is to keep the curriculum in sight of its educational role, which is to provide prospective EAA/T practitioners with a robust training programme, excellent opportunities to acquire the skills needed so that they may provide the very best service to challenged clients and to specialise in chosen aspects of EAA/T practice.

Durkheim (1956) suggested that the time is ripe to change an education system when new ideas have emerged. These ideas have not arisen unexpectedly. They have been elicited from the human consciousness and have percolated onto our 'to do' agenda having been ignored for a long time. Dunkheim (1956) argued that during this interim time, changes have been taking place, which can be regarded as an expression of what is really needed (Durkheim, 1956). In today's world of EAA/T, stakeholders want the experience to be therapeutic. They want the children and adults engaging with an EAA/T programme to come for **therapy.** Some educators have realised this and have already made some changes towards what is needed but, as one interviewee put it, these changes are just 'Band-Aids'. To meet stakeholder demands national organisations and the academic world should provide a learning and working environment and standards of practice for EAA/T students that are consistent with clients' and stakeholders' **demands of quality assurance** (Appendix 18.i).

6.1.1 The Study's Six Objectives

The study's six major objectives were met.

The first objective was to evaluate the curriculum and find ways to improve it. Participating students, practitioners, administrators and expert practitioners evaluated the curriculum. The participants represented the experience of practitioners in twenty

countries and their resounding verdict found the current EAA/T first curriculum to be inadequate for the training of EAA/T practitioners.

The study identified several curriculum shortcomings and made recommendations for improvement. The shortcomings were structural and people oriented. The recommendations addressing the structural shortcomings were concerned with the allocation of teaching and practice hours, the quality of the learning environments and the need for their adaptation to adult learning principles, the need for a preparatory year and the flexibility needed in order to integrate EAA/T studies with academic offerings. Recommendations addressing the people oriented shortcomings were concerned with teacher training and student admissions policies.

The second objective was to find out what colleagues, practitioners and experts in the field had to say about the curriculum. The study wanted to capture the voices of practitioners around the world. Among the participants were expert practitioners from twenty countries.

The second objective was reached. EAA/T practitioners worldwide were unison in that the current curricula did not meet the needs of prospective EAA/T practitioners, clients and stakeholders. Principal academies and organisations recognising the need for professionalisation were looking for leadership in making a transformative shift in the field. Students reported difficulties in engaging with various parts of the curriculum. In general, they felt that they were not well prepared for becoming practitioners. Expert practitioners felt that over the years the curriculum had developed professional gaps and that it was poorly delivered. The feelings of the experts were universal and impressive as they represented the scope and scale of their experience.

The third objective was to find out what were the principle topics, and what would be the best way to teach them. The study asked questions about the perception of experts about what the rank order of topics should be.

The third objective was reached as well. Three large groups of topics emerged: equestrian skills, psychology and human growth and development and intervention skills. EAA/T students and experts felt that they must reach proficiency in equestrian skills so that they might be able to teach these skills to their clients and in order to manage safely the

interaction of their clients with the horses used in the intervention. The courses in psychology that were to be part of the curriculum were ranked highly. Among them were Introduction to Psychology, Learning Theories and Learning Disabilities, Developmental Psychology and Thinking Skills. The third group of topics focused on Intervention Skills, the product of integrating theory and practice. In this group of topics, we can find a requirement for a prolonged supervised practice, the introduction of Mentoring and a shift in teaching strategies so that practice and theory become integrated.

The forth objective was to make recommendation for a future curriculum. The study explored topics currently being taught and the method employed to teach them.

The fourth objective was reached in full. The findings indicated that the methods being used to deliver the curriculum were not adapted to the principles of andragogy and used strategies of teaching that did not elicit the creation of knowledge and did not facilitate the integration of knowledge into practice (praxis). Action learning and problem solving were two of the recommended teaching strategies. Any future curriculum should provide experts who can apply theory during supervised practice in the authentic arena. This could guide the novice learner to competency, and eventually expertise.

The fifth objective was the investigation of various paradigm shifts that led to the professionalisation of other occupations and the design and strategy required for the professionalisation for EAA/T.

The fifth objective was reached by comparing Occupational Therapy, Social Work and Nursing to EAA/T. Paradigm shifts in these three disciplines has led to the professionalisation of these three occupations. A similar paradigm shift is needed in EAA/T in order to make the first steps towards professionalisation. The findings point to the prerequisite need for an EAA/T curriculum as a trigger for a paradigm shift.

The sixth objective was to fuel interest in the research, and to create interest in additional research, through dialogue with colleagues, experts and other stakeholders based on the findings. The study findings were disseminated globally to participants and the wider community of EAA/T experts and practitioners.

The sixth objective was met in full and the dissemination of the study's findings has taken on global characteristics. My Internet site has published the study's findings. I have been

invited to lecture on the findings by academic institutions and by professional organisations. Both Path Intl. (USA) and British Equestrian Federation are exploring ways to redesign their EAA/T training models.

6.1.2 Culturalism, Change and Governance

When looking at the big picture I found that different cultures have influenced EAA/T and have **played an important role in EAA/T curricula decision-making.** Researching four EAA/T models in different countries revealed three specific influencing cultures: volunteerism, entrepreneurism and individualism. Each of these cultures impacted curricula in different ways. In some instances, volunteerism held back creative ideas designed to adapt EAA/T training to changing realities preventing some national organisations from achieving their goal of **preparing prospective EAA/T practitioners for excellence in practice.** Instead we note that the findings indicated that prerequisites were limited by shrinking hour allocations to some topics and by removing from the curriculum and by not providing opportunities for practitioner specialisation. Any future step towards a professional curriculum would require a seismic shift by national organisations and academic policy makers to reduce the impact of volunteerism.

Entrepreneurism operates EAA/T training programmes with initiative and business accruement but leaves curricula open to the whims of **individualism**. Individualism permits national organisations and the providers of training programmes to manipulate curricula to meet membership, committee and political agendas. It allows for individual capitalistic views to lean strongly towards investment, performance, productivity, market and marketability. This reality could reduce professionalism possibilities, adherence to ethical standards, codes of practice and opportunities for change. In this rapidly changing world of globalisation, entrepreneurism and individualism are often accompanied by collectivism. To develop an effective professional curriculum requires collective entrepreneurship, a new working paradigm involving all stakeholders (Wijen, Ansari, 2007). If the academic world and national organisations collaborated with therapeutic riding centres EAA/T students could be provided with a professional curriculum and with the expertise necessary for their future job.

When national organisations and the academic world put membership and monetary gains before practical experience and the quality of the EAA/T graduates, they **often fail to adhere to high standards in both the transfer of knowledge and that of core values.** Empirical data revealed that high standards and core values produce better prepared practitioners with a greater understanding of the EAA/T practice and its value to stakeholders. Aligning the EAA/T curriculum with the requirements of practice as well as with the codes of ethical practice would stimulate professional growth and development and maintain high standards. Alignment could create more choice, quality and value; it could stimulate innovation and even competitiveness, and ultimately create more jobs for graduates.

Empowering the Federation of Horses in Education and Therapy International (HETI), as a governing body for global training equivalency could reshape global practice and policies. Working with national organisations and with the academic world could ensure the quality of new professional initiatives. By becoming the watchdog for global ethical standards, core values and best practice, it could consolidate the positions of national organisations, academic institutions and therapeutic riding centres engaged in practice.

6.1.3 Education, Educators and Practice

Overall, the Delphi Method's collective consensus maintained that the **input of higher education is essential**, however, participants expressed their concerns about admission policies, training, teacher education and teaching methods, experiential learning, topics of study and equestrian skills. It was clear from past and present points of view in the literature that **pre-requisites for admission must be stabilised.** A recommendation for the future could be that national organisations standardise admission requirements ensuring the EAA/T students enter training with the qualifications required for the study of EAA/T.

Researching empirical data, global EAA/T models, historical data and current up to date data provided by Delphi responders and EAA/T students it became clear that the new curricula will need **expert equestrian educators** who have EAA/T knowledge and teaching abilities to transfer their expertise. If national organisations could collectively focus on ways to **educate educators to prepare the most effective practitioners,** the

quality bar could be raised dramatically for EAA/T graduating practitioners. By focusing on educational standards, educators could learn new skills to educate **all** their students to achieve the highest possible learning outcomes (Levine, 2006). It would require making a seismic shift for many EAA/T curricula **from teacher-centred learning to student-centred learning.** This does not require reinventing the wheel, as there are courses in the academic world that could supply educators with these new teaching skills. New teaching skills could open up new opportunities for active learning and contribute to **educator and student personal growth**. Educators will be able to understand the students' educative mission, which is central to them understanding EAA/T in the context of the training programme.

The empirical data demands that educators learn to use different pedagogic paradigms as they provide a forum where educators and EAA/T students can interweave theory into practice, making theory more explicit through its application. These experiential learning techniques explore and realise EAA/T students' full potential and provide educators with an opportunity to be both a theorist and a practitioner. **If pedagogic paradigms became the preferred techniques for experiential practice they could become part of the new educative mission.** Currently, it appears that they are hardly used. This situation could be rectified if educators have opportunities to **learn how to operate various pedagogic paradigms.** They could join existing teacher or nurse training programmes that specialise in these techniques.

From the impassioned comments made by newly qualified practitioners who were calling for more expert support, **supervised practice was a crucial part of EAA/T training. Supervised practice requires mentors and coaches to understand the needs of their EAA/T students and to understand what is an authentic practice experience.** Although mentor and coach training schemes do exist in several countries there is often an inadequate assessment and evaluation method that could reduce the ability to determine whether or not expertise standards were reached.

Supervised practice still needs much more consideration. All participants wanted the best supervised practice possible but no recommendation could be made on the number of hours needed to ensure practical expertise based on the findings.

EAA/T curricula had gaps in transmission, which according to curriculum theories appears to be equated with most curricula, which are transmitted as syllabi. This traditional textbook approach **lacks the ability to translate ideas into a hypothesis**, an active process, where conversations are established between the educator and student, provoking reflection and action. Any future curriculum should consider the **process and praxis based educational theoretical models, for EAA/T education.** The process model encourages an educator's continual evaluation of EAA/T student achievement of learning outcomes and skills, an indication of the effectiveness of the teaching method used. The educator, diagnosing problems occurring within the course has the opportunity to adapt his or her teaching to meet the needs of prospective EAA/T practitioners. The praxis model establishes a dialogue between educators and EAA/T students, maximising opportunities for experiential learning through interaction between educators, students and the creation of knowledge.

The Delphi Method revealed that **training requirements were too low for what is considered today's best EAA/T practice standards**. The open admission policy, superficial content knowledge and limited practical expertise are all curriculum gaps that need resolving before a new future curriculum can become reality. Moving in the direction of an **academic degree would resolve these problems and increase career possibilities.** However current training models and philosophies should not be disbanded but rather redesigned to become part of a professional curriculum. **A spiral curriculum** could provide constructive and reflective training processes at various academic levels, which would make it possible to train educators, and provide a career structure for EAA/T practitioners. A spiral curriculum with scaffolding provides educator support for the honing of critical and intuitive thinking skills and motivational support. This professional curriculum design could place EAA/T alongside other healthcare professions.

From ancient times to current day thinking it became apparent that the **horse** should regain its rightful place as central to EAA/T and the therapeutic process. Any future curriculum must **fully engage in equestrianism** so that EAA/T students enter the field fully equipped with **equestrian knowledge and skills to build human/horse connections.** It is impossible to work efficiently and safely in an arena with a horse unless the EAA/T practitioners have the education to know how to work in partnership with a

horse. In addition, it is unreal to assume EAA/T students know how to generate any type of therapeutic intervention without the knowledge of horseback riding and managing skills.

Stakeholder consensus is critical if EAA/T is to be recognised as a profession. **Rich descriptions of EAA/T are essential to promote it and build a public understanding of its uniqueness.** EAA/T is often represented in the news as a joy ride for small children or by a picture, which may speak a thousand words but lacks the therapeutic content needed. These methods of exposure prevent the public from understanding EAA/T as a speciality and valuable intervention therapy. The public does not see any clear delineating line between riding for sport and EAA/T special therapeutic services, and expect EAA/T to be on a par with other healthcare specialties and therapies. Academic research does help, but often it is biased towards the writer's speciality and does not showcase the uniqueness of EAA/T. Rich descriptions of EAA/T could promote public awareness and the much-needed funding **for research and development that is necessary to make EAA/T an evidence-based practice.** Financial poverty undermines the possibilities of practitioner expertise and any expansion of an EAA/T curriculum and career prospects. For EAA/T to become an evidence–based profession it will have to undergo a **complete reformation of the EAA/T education system,** as well as collaboration between national organisations and academia with, if possible a new global governing body. **Even if it takes a generation to build up the image and self-confidence of EAA/T educators, it will be worth it as this is key for any successful future curriculum.**

6.2 The Last Word from the Researcher

Finally, this work-based project has immersed me in a discovery process about EAA/T practice and EAA/T training. The robust research has gathered vast amounts of historical and current data, including material which was not easily accessible, nor was it common knowledge. Using multiple means of communication via the Delphi Method systematically structured the completeness and complexity of ideas into recommendations for a new future EAA/T curriculum. It put together a structure that exposed the good and bad of policy actions, causal relationships, real and perceived

human motivations, and priorities of personal values and social goals (Linstone and Turoff, 2002).

During the research the strategy of analysis connected me with colleagues and EAA/T experts and other stakeholders. It made distance irrelevant, it set me at the intersection of sociology, politics and literature, all components of a system I was investigating, providing access to both theory and practice and various perspectives. Although positioned at the intersection, maintaining strict boundaries encouraged my critical thinking and creativity, while enhancing my communication skills. This has been an amazing **RIDE.**

The final chapter includes the dissemination process, my personal reflections and a summary of a **Future Curriculum**.

Chapter Seven

Chapter 7: Dissemination

This final chapter includes the dissemination process, its objectives, ethical issues, benefits dissemination channels and what has been done so far. In addition, it includes my personal reflections and a summary of the new future curriculum.

7.1 Dissemination of Key Findings

Disseminating the research findings is essential if they are to contribute to future EAA/T curricula and perhaps become an all-important intermediary step toward adoption of a new EAA/T training approach (Oldenburg et al, 1997). Effective dissemination familiarises all stakeholders with the relevant research findings. (Wong, Henderson, and Katz, (2002) suggest

> *ideally, users and stakeholders should dynamically change their policies and practice from the findings, (Wong, T., et al., 2002, p. 35) and motivated to meet the challenges of adopting a new curriculum.*

This chapter explains the objectives, ethical issues, benefits and the process and stages of dissemination that lead to diffusion, adoption, utilisation and sustainability. It describes how the research findings will be disseminated and diffused over a period of time and how social systems will contribute to the creation of a new awareness to existing EAA/T curricula and the need to build a new future curriculum (Elliot, O'Loughlin, Robinson, Cameron, Harvey, Raine and Gelskey, 2003).

Disseminating extends the reach of the findings. It might encourage EAA/T educator experts to propagate and benefit from the findings (Elsey, 2006) through effective, ongoing support and application within the wider EAA/T community.

7.2 Dissemination Objectives

Dissemination is crucial if the research findings are to **assist a wide range of EAA/T stakeholders, curriculum builders and policy makers become familiar with the realities of current curricula.** The core objective of dissemination is **utilisation** (Granger and White, 2001). On the one hand, the findings of this study could contribute

to the elimination of the curricular gaps that were identified, could bring about changes in admission policy and a shift in teaching foci. The findings could also become the leverage needed for a paradigmatic change among practitioners and be a first step toward EAA/T professionalisation.

On the other hand, even though these research findings could assist EAA/T reformation and design, it is not a certainty that everyone will view the findings positively and they may reject their use (Granger and White, 2001).

Disseminating the study's findings **ensures a level of transparency that opens the research to scrutiny and interpretation.** In order to prevent bias from tingeing the findings and their interpretation, I asked significant others from among my friends and colleagues and my supervisors at the University of Derby to assess the findings for accuracy, and to ascertain that no breach of confidentiality took place.

7.3 Ethical Issues of Dissemination

Disseminating the findings raises ethical decisions beyond the issues concerned with research design and methodologies, (Winston, 2007, p. 236). There were principles of 'trust and accountability' to which I must adhere (p. 108). Accountability is a strong tool for analysing information and for legitimising outcomes. I am politically accountable to my national and international therapeutic riding associations, (Shaul, et al., 2005, p. 1-6). I am accountable to my University Review Board who gave me the opportunity to conduct this research and who expected me to be fiscally responsible, honest and reliable, while producing an authentic study that is original, innovative and motivating, (Joy, 2009, pp. 262- 274). I am accountable and respect my supervisors who have contextualise my results and those who participated and invested in my research (De Ville, 2002, p. 21).

The research study brought together many experts and experienced practitioners who maintained anonymity and, following the research study they dispersed. I am accountable to them, as well as EAA/T stakeholders and the public at large who require transparency of all material published. I am also responsible for any adverse outcomes and the effect my findings may have on the EAA/T community, (De Ville, 2002, p. 21). I cannot violate research regulations, misrepresent and/or report inaccurately recorded data, misread or falsify conclusions and observations, or commit intentional negligence by not reporting

all relevant observations. "*Accounts should exhibit interpretive sufficiency"*, (Christians et al., 1993 cited in Denzin & Lincoln, p. 902), "*Sloppy, insufficient and selective data is poor science*", (Adler, 1991, cited in Huberman and Miles, p. 294). Reporting truthfully and having integrity are also part of making me an expert in my field. Fiduciary responsibilities require me to be transparent and honest relative to any existing limitations or weaknesses of my study to protect against anyone misapplying the outcomes. (Shaul et al., 2005)

As I am embedded in my research and have worked within the field of EAA/T for many years, it was important that I remained objective and considered the research without bias. Ultimately I will need to negotiate an agreement with the journal before I publish my findings (Jassin, 2004). I must accept that journals have the right to ownership of my intellectual property via the publication of papers, whether they are published online or through periodicals, which could cause conflict when summaries have been published on my website and Facebook page, and in the future in lower status magazines.

Before dissemination it was my responsibility to let colleagues know how I am going to 'spread the word', which was another opportunity to further interface with colleagues and practitioners thus incorporating them into the project (Elliot et al., 2003).

It was my responsibility to those who have provided me with the data on which my research was based to remove all identifying data from the research, any reports, publications and conference material. All audiotapes and transcripts will remain as private and confidential documents and will be stored in a secure place for five years according to Derby University policy.

7.4 Benefits of Dissemination

Disseminating my research is part of my commitment to my supervising advisory body at the University. Dissemination has made me aware of the importance of linking the research, its design and praxis (Methodology) to the characteristics of intended users (Elsey, 2006). Realistically it has helped me to understand the fundamental purpose of my research (Serrat, 2005). It has made me consider the findings, and the degree of impact they may potentially have upon the practice of users.

7.5 The Most Effective Model of Dissemination

I identified five models of dissemination (Elliot et al., 2003). However, only one model suits my method of dissemination. Any model that only focuses on, and is modified to adapt to user needs and concerns, was not attractive to me, because it fails to consider organisational and other community interests. In the same way, a model that focuses only on the concentrated interests of organisations and operating rules, but missed user interests is equally unviable.

The **best-fit** model was one that engaged stakeholders, and me, as the researcher, to act upon the findings, one that increased awareness understanding, and eventual action through an effective strategy of transfer of knowledge and skills. (Harmsworth and Turpin, 2000). The transfer strategy should fit both a formal and informal mechanism that keeps me connected with all parties, and emphasised the interests, concerns, objectives and constraints raised by both the stakeholders and me.

7.6 Dissemination Channels

I have chosen a multi-faceted approach that funnels information through both visual and auditory channels including workshops, conferences and computer Internet technology (CIT) that includes web sites, newsletters, email, telephone, and Facebook. Eventually the research will be available to users in full text in the University of Derby library. Using these dissemination channels could establish an interactive mechanism of constant contact between me and my users and EAA/T stakeholders (Hunter, Hawkins, and Dunn, 1994).

7.7 Dissemination So far

Disseminating the findings began in 2012, when I presented a lecture at the HETI International Riding for the Disabled Conference in Athens (2012). The lecture presented reported on the status of EAA/T, and the possible gaps in current curricula. In addition, it indicated the possible impact the findings might have on the global EAA/T community. In 2014, EAA/T educators from the academic world and from national organisations in

the USA requested the research findings so that they could be used in their bid to raise the bar for EAA/T in the USA (Appendix 22.i).

In February of 2015, I was invited to Bishops Burton College, UK to present the research findings to THR academic staff and students and RDA stakeholders and equestrian experts who were considering adopting a new approach in place of the current RDA UK programme. As a direct result of this presentation the first EAA/T group was established in North Yorkshire, UK for Veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and physical disabilities.

In June of 2015, I presented the key findings at the HETI International Riding for Disabled Conference in Taiwan (2015). The International conference gave the findings the global exposure I had planned (Appendix 22.ii and 22.iii).

EAA/T in the USA is currently engaged in a survey that is a direct result of the research I conducted (Appendix 22.iv).

In September of 2015, I was invited to Southampton University, UK, by a group of occupational therapists to present my findings to qualified occupational therapists and physiotherapists who came from all around the UK. These specialists held positions in RDA UK and in the association of chartered physiotherapists, therapeutic riding (ACPTR). Following two days of discussions and workshops, it was decided that Occupational Therapists in the UK should pursue a post-graduate diploma in EAA/T (Appendix 22.i).

7.8 Translating Research into Practice

Ultimately, I will endeavour to use traditional professional journalism as a method of dissemination as this could provide me with an authoritative voice for EAA/T, as well as a platform for professional recognition of the research project.

By disseminating the completed project in a well-advertised educational journal directly relevant to my subject would create action awareness among stakeholders and the community at large. Locally, I am publishing a power point presentation of the findings and posting it on my centre's website. To encourage readers to visit the site I will announce the publication via INTRA's Facebook page and monthly newsletter. To reach

other countries I will try to disseminate the findings via the Federation Riding for Disabled 'International Scientific Journal for Therapeutic Riding' that is now peer reviewed and could establish a strong link to utilisation.

7.9 From Dissemination to Implementation

To implement action, requires the initiation of the diffusion of the findings to be acted upon. According to Rogers (1995 cited in Pentz, 2004), diffusion occurs in four stages: adoption, implementation, dissemination and sustainability. For adoption and dissemination, I must engage in **face-to face contact** (Crandall, 1989) such as the above-mentioned conferences and workshops. Further dissemination required meetings with the teaching staff about the possible benefits of a new curriculum. According to Mihalic and Irwin (in press, cited in Pentz, 2004) barriers to implementation are lack of staff training and inadequate practice facilities. Rogers (1995 cited in Pentz, 2004) reported that another problem of effective dissemination is 'unplanned adaption, or reinvention'. If there is a mismatch between the research and the realities of practice there will be a low adoption rate (Schillinger, 2010). For implementation and support of a new future curriculum, and if the real world is to be influenced by the findings, other evidence-based research is needed. New research could generate new insights and knowledge about the EAA/T curriculum – for the future.

7.10 Sustainability

Sustainability can only succeed when there is sufficient funding, trained personnel (Akerlund, 2000; Backer, Swisher and Clayton, in Pentz, 2004), and if the community of stakeholders is fully engaged in the implementation process and provides support for a new professional validated curriculum. Sustainability could only be reached after a structured dissemination process.

Knowing the comprehensive benefits of effective dissemination, I saw how closely integrated dissemination was with the project itself. Dissemination is not simply an element of the project, it ***is*** the project, and it is ongoing. I was well prepared to undergo the steps outlined, and meet the challenges I have identified head on.

7.11 Personal Reflections

During the past six years, I have been on a journey that was beyond my expectations. Writing a doctoral thesis has been a major success for me. I have experienced a sense of enthusiasm that produced momentum generating personal and professional change. The doctorate has been an opportunity for me to focus and expose internal vision into an external reality, the thesis. Looking back, with the thesis completed, I can say that it was sometimes an exhausting experience. However, the new knowledge and learned skills of writing and critical reflection have empowered my teaching ability and daily work as an Equine Assisted Activities and Therapy practitioner. My research has given me a direction and sense of fulfilment that aligns with the opportunity to pursue my passion.

Writing a dissertation often took me out of my comfort zone, especially when it came to gathering and analysing data. To capture quality evidence that built convincing and credible findings required asking colleagues and practitioners to trust me, and often expose their innermost concerns and feelings about the topic. It was important not to distort the findings in any way. I had to make sure as a researcher embedded in the field I represented their thoughts accurately and without misinterpretation. Asking people to disclose their thoughts and observations, even with anonymity required not only a significant level of trust on their part but also ethical maturity from me. The data collection and analysis gave me a new sense of anonymity that has been emotionally gratifying.

The doctorate thesis was the longest and most difficult piece of work I had ever completed. The actual writing process did not always go smoothly, most of the time I would over write, and spend many hours reducing text. I remember when my supervisors read my literature review and told me I had already written the whole thesis twice over! It was, and still is, hard for me to consolidate and focus information leaving extraneous findings for perhaps some future project.

Initially, I did not have aspirations or convincing theories about the dissertation process. The research question was built from a hunch. This was the first time an EAA/T curriculum was being investigated in such depth using multiple methods of data gathering and analysis-this was my drive.

It took some time to believe in myself that I was a researcher, even though I was well supported by my colleagues and practitioners who encouraged me by keeping in touch with the process and asking for findings. The findings are already being used in discussion papers, and will be published in a future journal paper.

The dissertation has been a learning experience, developing a level of self-sufficiency that has taught me how to focus on research processes, statistics, and analysis. This has given me a range of planning and research skills that will be of great value working for the future of EAA/T.

7.12 A Future Curriculum, Project Summary

7.12.1 Overall Goal

The overall goal is: To provide prospective EAA/T practitioners with a professional qualification. This, in turn, validates practice and creates a new national standard for EAA/T.

The aim is to provide prospective EAA/T practitioners with the knowledge of a holistic non-invasive approach to healing.

To provide an understanding of the following:

- The principles of EAA/T practice.
- Knowledge of how EAA/T facilitates the health and welfare of humans.
- Equestrian knowledge and skills.
- Knowledge to facilitate the human-horse bond.

7.12.2 Curriculum Vision

- To provide the highest standards of training and expertise, for knowledge and education, risk supervision, and safety.
- To provide prospective EAA/T practitioners with knowledge and education, so that they will enter the authentic arena with confidence.
- To provide a quality commitment of service to challenged children and adults, who wish to participate in EAA/T.

- To be an educational resource for all levels of training and continued personal development.
- To provide experts who can transfer theory into practice, and supervise practice.
- To provide a curriculum possessing the level of constancy that matches current knowledge and practice.
- To provide a means for on-going assessment.

7.12.3 Curriculum Structure

The new spiral curriculum is an expanded curriculum that includes opportunities for higher levels of education, including degree courses, specialisation, coaching, and educator courses, as well as continued professional development (CPD). The spiral approach matches instruction to student learning capabilities, while maintaining an overarching goal to move students forward in their careers. To be most successful it is pillared by flexible meta-cognitive scaffolds that support students' personal growth on their career incentive journey. It is a transformative experience for all EAA/T practitioners, as they move from being novice practitioners to experts in the field. The journey will begin with a foundation course made up of core topics and theory of practice, providing many tools and techniques necessary for authentic practice. Tools for EAA/T practice represent information, education, observation, and skills that connect human challenges and pathological manifestations to the horse, equine activities, and therapy, for achieving a significant healing process in all environments.

7.12.4 Methodology

The spiral curriculum begins with a 480-hour diploma foundation course, which covers basic topics essential to EAA/T practice as well as experiential and supervised practice.

The topics provide:

1. An opportunity for personal growth and development, and a level of professional competency to enter the field with confidence.
2. EAA/T theory in the following areas: psychology, physiology, normal human development, neurological and functional anatomy, pathologies and diseases.

Prospective EAA/T practitioners will also study the knowledge of the evolution of EAA/T, and the human-horse bond.

3. New theoretical knowledge applied to practice via experiential learning, pedagogic paradigms, and supervised practice.
4. The principles of practice, encouraging prospective EAA/T practitioners to be conversant with new learning theories, paradigms of learning, horseback riding models and skills, as well as ethical issues for both humans and horses.
5. Practical experience in a safe and secure environment. EAA/T experts offer their expertise via experiential learning and during authentic practice.

7.12.5 Foundation Course: Curriculum Goals

1. To raise the bar of prospective EAA/T practitioners' knowledge and education, to produce graduates who can service clients that choose EAA/T as their activity or therapeutic intervention for improving their wellness.
2. To provide an effective learning experience associated with the horse, via a contemporary curriculum.
3. To provide learning activities that are designed to achieve specific educational goals, for the new graduate and the service.
4. To devise a system of experiences that produce the specified desired behaviours in the graduate entering the field, for instance self-confidence, self-reflection, and critical thinking skills.
5. To provide well-prepared teachers who could propagate student knowledge in a rich learning environment, and apply theory to practice.
6. To provide prospective EAA/T practitioners with sufficient tools to practice.
7. To provide prospective EAA/T practitioners with education and in-depth knowledge of content, sufficient knowledge of pathologies and manifestations, best educational practices, crucial equestrian horsemanship, and practical skills.
8. To provide a national standard and accreditation of the EAA/T practitioner.

7.12.6 Foundation Course: Evaluation

Graduating practitioners are professionally trained by gaining new knowledge, tools and confidence to practice in any future EAA/T job. They will have appropriate and adequate opportunities to practice EAA/T in any authentic arena using EAA/T interventions, which

have a positive effect upon clients' needs.

7.12.7 Foundation Course: Graduate EAA/T Practitioners Demonstrate

1. Sufficient knowledge and skills to provide and facilitate EAA/T.
2. An understanding of the principles of EAA/T practice, the security of practice, and the application of theory to practice.
3. Knowledge of their working partner, **the horse**, as well as expertise in equestrian skills.
4. Knowledge of human health and its possible challenges. The graduate practitioner must have knowledge of pathologies and manifestations of these pathologies.
5. Knowledge to choose the correct horse movement activity and environment, which will not cause further harm to pathological manifestations.
6. Knowledge of the human/horse partnership, and how to use its uniqueness to benefit various pathological manifestations.
7. Knowledge of how to provide and facilitate interventions, built on human-horse relationships.

Post-graduation EAA/T practitioners may continue their career in EAA/T via an ever - expanding spiral curriculum. Choosing a path, graduates will build on prior knowledge from the foundation course experience. Expanding knowledge and education develop expertise and professional performance, as well as personal growth and development**.**

7.12.8 Curriculum: Support Courses

The spiral curriculum is designed to provide support courses for prospective EAA/T practitioners who need remediation classes, and in-service training via clinics and workshops for graduate continual personal development (CPD) in the work place. There are courses for curriculum educators, participating prospective EAA/T practitioners, and graduates continued personal development.

For prospective EAA/T practitioners there are:

- Preparation classes prior to the EAA/T basic training, for students who require a more informed foundation before admission to the program.
- Where a lack of understanding persists, students may receive additional information, experience, discussion, etc. These classes maybe necessary until the student displays

mastery of the task or information.

EAA/T educators must be given an opportunity to become EAA/T experts. Up to now, curricula are providing elements of training for EAA/T educators, often creating conflict with an andragogy ideology. Often EAA/T educators are specialists who have grown into the role without any formal teacher education, which might be an obstacle to teaching.

EAA/T courses require educators (classroom teachers, mentors, supervisors, coaches), to be motivators who represent scaffolding that supports the spiral curriculum. The creation of knowledge and acquisition of skills depends upon the connections between the roles of the educator, his or her knowledge of student needs, his or her ability to adapt to the challenges posed by the different learning styles of prospective EAA/T practitioners' experience, the codes of practice and the responsibility to motivate prospective EAA/T practitioners into a critical knowledgeable thinker during practice.

7.12.9 Summary

A new spiral curriculum is crucial if EAA/T is to become a profession with career incentives. It can embrace all fractions of the EAA/T community, providing all practitioners who partner with horses the knowledge and practice for facilitating a unique service to the challenged community. It could create a workforce that would adequately support contemporary stakeholder requirements and imperatives. Practitioners would have the opportunity to be **professionally** trained rather than **in the process of being trained** through **lifelong learning.**

A new spiral curriculum would provide education and knowledge for EAA/T practitioners to practice a variety of treatment options. They would be able to support any non-invasive treatment plan by providing the most effective EAA/T preventative, rehabilitative, or remedial interventions. A **spiral curriculum** is the future of the profession and will fit the needs of most national curricula.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Tables

Appendix 1.i: Obstacles to Change

Expert collective consensus cross-matches with FG and IN implied responses when they spoke about obstacles that could prevent raising the bar for professional and personal development. These pertinent comments were relevant and were another justification for changing the culture and curriculum.

Categories	Master Code + Sub-Code	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey Collective Consensus	Focus Groups (F) Responses	Interviews (Experienced EAA/T Practitioners) (I) Responses
National	OC-N	No government recognition that EAA/T is a profession. No national standards.	No national standards or synchronisation of organisational standards.	Professional licensing only possible with a university course for 3-4 years.
Organisational	OC-O	Concerned that accreditation is in the hands of charitable organisations.	EAA/T education should come from academia not charitable organisations.	The culture of volunteerism is a problem EAA/T is suffering from fracturing.

Categories	Master Code + Sub-Code	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey Collective Consensus	Focus Groups (F) Responses	Interviews (Experienced EAA/T Practitioners) (I) Responses
Professional	OC-Prof	EAA/T practitioners should be trained riding instructors. Professional that means a full-time career with academic training.	To be professional - must have qualifications in equestrian skills, As well as 4-year degree programme.	Extend the course, include more knowledge and education as well as equestrian and horsemanship skills
Personal	OC-Personal	Not enough self-awareness and basic knowledge. No incentives	Attitudes/ practitioner beliefs affect the preparedness of students (PEP) towards study. No incentives!	No incentives – almost no chance of promotion. More self -awareness is needed to understand riders' needs.
Profile	OC-Profile	No clear intake profile. Academia and organisations accept everyone.	No intake profile. No EAA/T graduate profile.	Organisations and colleges accept anyone on to the courses to make it viable – no profile.
Money	OC-M	No money for further training. EAA/T not valued.	Not enough money in EAA/T Everyone earns the same regardless of qualification.	Still no money to pay educators and practitioners.

Appendix 1.ii: Professional and Personal Development / Training

Expert collective consensus cross-matches with FG and IN implied responses and correlates with SQ goals and expectations for professional and personal development, justifying the need for a new and improved **training**:

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ) (PEP – Prospective EAA/T Practitioners)
A	We need a total emphasis on education and training, with academic teachers PhD level---	Not enough knowledge base to support our people … currently a Band-Aid to the larger global vision to see that change needs to happen.	An enormous difference between someone who possesses a university thinking process than one that relies only on intuition.	To receive the required knowledge for becoming a better instructor at the end of the course.
B	I think this is an important component (of the curriculum). There are many professors at colleges teaching courses in EAA/T that do not have the knowledge base to do so. I took this question to mean more standardisation for college professors teaching the courses in EAA/T.	More practical encounters with authentic situations. We have to give these guys the tools for empirical research.	People leading the courses must have a BA. A profession means doing it as a full-time career it has to be university-based. EAA/T must look like a global entity and not some specialised part. Students (PEP) must know how the horse affects the human body.	To help children and fulfill myself.

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ) (PEP – Prospective EAA/T Practitioners)
C	Knowledge is missing in the programmes. For example: Parents guiding, group therapy, Interview techniques --- more hours of theoretical and practical learning on specific therapeutic work such as motor plans, sensory difficulties.	The only way to bring up the bar is to make the course longer… in stages, exams then clinics and more exams.	Need to have knowledge and self-awareness… every EAA/T practitioner needs a broad background, which will help them in the future to specialise.	To make a living.
D	We need the correct curriculum and range of qualifications that allows EAA/T practitioners and facilitators/coaches the chance to be recognised as professionals.	I think as it is now, one has to think about the starting- point and the qualifications of the person who comes to the courses, and then the base-point and then to do a straight line to decide what is your goal, which level you want to reach.	Ideally, a degree would be the better way to go… we don't even have a directory of jobs … no jobs as riding instructors … it is not like the recognised thing … so ideally for the college it would be the best education, it would be a degree programme.	To work in a field that I love and that interests me.

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ) (PEP – Prospective EAA/T Practitioners)
E	I base my thoughts on my involvement in a four-year degree programme for EAA/T. I have seen it work. You look at the strengths of the college, its courses, and make certain (students/PEP) can obtain knowledge and skills from professors in their specific fields.	I think the entry level is too low as it lacks knowledge in equine behaviour and the understanding of concepts related to human behaviour and relationships. There is a huge difference between a college curriculum and a therapeutic riding centre curriculum or any approved training courses that are not integrated into a college programme.	Many of our peers have not had the possibility of a degree programme. To be a true professional and recognised as a profession we need to let it go into college or university so it becomes a degree course. Have a structured curriculum maintained at university much like a PT, OT and nurse who gain practical experience, with high standards.	To create for myself new options to make a better living
F	I strongly feel it is very desirable to create a professional degree level curriculum alongside vocational training which can offer accredited further learning not just for young people starting their careers but also for mature people wishing to devote their lives to this work.	The diploma is shallow it has to have enough practical and theory We have to support students (PEP) and make it a viable profession if you have knowledge of what you are doing then apply it through the programme and continue it throughout the training.	Some of us are trying to push for more creative curriculum as the industry grows.	To obtain an interesting profession.

Appendix 1.iii: Professional and Personal Development Admission Policy

Expert collective consensus cross-matches with FG and IN implied responses and correlates with SQ goals and expectations for professional and personal development justifying the need to change-**admission policies**:

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
A	Completion of a basic high school education would help to ensure maturity in students' (PEP) thought processes, as well as ability to understand some of the basic concepts regarding disabilities. Additional higher education in a related field would be advantageous.	Our organisation is motivated by money. So, it accepts a lower level entry that is affordable. This decreases the quality of the profession … you meet resistance to any change.	This is a very appealing field as it has horses; we have made it too easy to become a certified instructor – the entry level is too low - No incentive in our organisation – everyone is self-motivated – the field is not taken seriously. No certificate or degree. Questionable quality programmes in our country. This is the reason we are not validated.	Question Not asked

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
B	The entry-level qualifications are too low.	We are not requiring the pre-requisites to be met for the entry intake.	I think it's good if you have the equine part first before studying EAA/T. I think we (EAA/T practitioners) miss out on the horse knowledge. People should have taught able-bodied riders before studying EAA/T. We get into bit of trouble these days because they (EAA/T practitioners) do not have a strong horse background.	
C	If there are not enough students (PEP) with equestrian qualifications- close the course.	I think the entry level is too low as it lacks knowledge in equine behaviour and the understanding of concepts related to human behaviour and relationships.	Just do not accept anyone without horse experience on to the course.	
D	I think a person with learning difficulties can be excellent EAA/T practitioner. Still he must acquire the requisite knowledge that is so important for this work.	Our practitioner level is much too low. How do we fill the gap? Each national organisation has its own standards, which are too low.	Certificates are given out without testing whether people have the knowledge. If they are nice they get a certificate. In our country, there are hundreds of people with this certificate.	

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
E	Horse knowledge should be in the profile for admission.	"Jane Blogs" (pseudonym) comes as a volunteer –she becomes interested - we can take her down a path to become an equestrian. She will get her equestrian knowledge on the way. The weakness of this theory is that it is possible to be an EAA/T practitioner without a broad equestrian knowledge.	There are some kids that do not have the personality to do EAA/T work while others are great. We need to build a base of EAA/T; recognising gap begins early, which allows people without a horsey base to come to EAA/T too early.	
F	I think that any therapist (EAA/T practitioner) should have basic learning skills. A student (PEP) that did not achieve 12 years of school and school matriculation, will probably have a great deal of difficulty to maintain his learning while working in the field.	What is the equestrian entry level coming in? Ride a horse? Or not ride? (The level is still undecided)	So, they should only allow people to get into EAA/T who have a degree. I think the intake profile is too low.	

Appendix 1.iv: Professional and Personal Development Academic Degree

Expert collective consensus cross-matches with FG and IN implied responses and correlates with SQ goals and expectations for professional and personal development justifying the need for **academic degree and an expanded curriculum**:

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
A	If we are to increase professionalism in the field of EAA/T, then we must have higher levels of education.	I do not need an MA in education I need to go up in the EAA/T field, I think EAA/T practitioners must have the opportunity to learn how to differentiate teaching techniques as well as learning what is the difference between teaching an adult or a child.	I think the curriculum should have academic learning, with everything from anatomy to psychology, and perhaps then the opportunity for increased specialisation.	To work in this field and become a professional.

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
B	Ideally a degree would be the better way to go. Potentially a four-year degree program could have a great recognition, but this has not happened in the US.	I would say No; the education is not sufficient for practitioners. It is not an affective training for practitioners. Using a "universal" curriculum (referring to standards and self-image of the profession), it is difficult to validate our field, and especially as we still do not even know what to call ourselves.	A college degree will jump start the industry.	To be professionalised in the area.

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
C	EAA/T should be recognised as a profession... There are colleges that have started to make that a reality by having 4-year degrees in EAA/T. Currently, the recognition of the difference between an EAA/T practitioner that pursued a 4-year degree and one who did not is a consumer problem (they don't know the difference or don't care because is only service available near them). As more are graduated and perhaps provide better instruction, people will seek out the person with the professional title from a college/university.	We need to stop little individual training schemes we need a centralised scheme. Centralised university setting, coming up with certificate programs, which would deal with the entire course learning - behavioural issues and teach some actual riding skills. Based on a four-year programme the EAA/T graduates like our equine studies students can do anything.	Higher education opens up the possibilities of specialisation.	To gain more knowledge in EAA/T to become a better therapist.
D	Professional licensing can only take place if people are prepared to engage in 3-4 years of university tuition.	I have started something for universities by saying the Masters of EAA/T is equivalent to PHD.	Medical insurances recognise a university degree.	To gain knowledge and confidence that will allow me to be creative as a therapeutic riding instructor.

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
E	I think that there should be a masters and doctorate available for EAA/T practitioners... to pursue a specialised body of knowledge.	The bit we are missing out is the customer service- I think we should do some more focusing on some elements of stakeholder needs. We must do research- it can show us how to work with the rider.	Ideally for a degree programme would be the best education.	To gain knowledge and confidence that will allow me to be creative as a therapeutic riding instructor (EAA/T practitioner).
F	I think the curriculum should have academic learning, with everything from anatomy to psychology, and perhaps then the opportunity for increased specialisation".	Changing the course is the only way farms and managers (stakeholders) will know who can instruct children with learning difficulties or physical disabilities.	They must be good in the classroom. I am an academic and quite good critical thinker.	To be able to teach an EAA/T session.

Appendix 1.v: Professional and Personal Development Governance

Expert collective consensus cross-matches with FG and IN implied responses for professional and personal development justifying the need **governance or a par with the profession**:

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Quest. (SQ)
A	I feel we need a new global organisation that is professional, objective, unprejudiced and well funded, not just run by volunteers, with a total emphasis on education and training, with academic teachers who have Ph.D., as well as those who have spent their lives working in EAA/T.	There should be a professional body that is responsible for all areas of knowledge including equestrian and horsemanship.	These people are only professional coz they did a 4-year course at university and the government accepts that making it a profession.	Questions about governance not asked.

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Quest. (SQ)
B	(Xx), they are doing a fairly good job of providing standardised criteria for the various instructor levels. They have attempted to provide guidance to higher educational institutions, which are offering EAA/T curricula, but this is all over the map ---	We must validate our credentials – A Master degree in horseback riding should be equivalent to any Master degree.	We recognise the need for certification, with high standards. I am not sure how to get us to this point.	
C	It is desirable but difficult to attain- in essence, one would have to create a whole new profession that is recognised by the government - like they did in Austria for animal assisted therapists.	We must define our professional status from within and have a strong association and informed governing bodies. The problem in the equestrian world in the USA is that we are still a bit fractured and very little work has gone into synthesising activities.	We do not even have a title in the directory of jobs – no recognised jobs even as riding instructor – it is not like the recognised thing.	

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Quest. (SQ)
D	With no controls people often fall into abysmal routines.	Xx- Could not go the next step because it is volunteered-based --- and not professional (Xx) has to address that, and how far can it go. We are shooting ourselves in the foot.	In Germany, you have to meet criteria set by the government. If I do not keep my license active, then the riding club cannot receive any money. In hippo therapy, education and sport (EAA/T) you have to keep your license up dated by the government every two years.	
E	There should be a government law behind our entire field. Once it will be done I think that the health department should provide the quality control and regulation	Ministries don't endorse us --- we are not involved with the medical profession. Legally they should have a license to practice EAA/T. The public is becoming more open to it. No one ministry takes care of EAA/T	I believe that it is very important who gives the certificate.	

Appendix 1.vi: Professional and Personal Development Adoption

Expert collective consensus cross-matches with FG and IN implied responses and correlates with SQ goals and expectations for professional and personal development justifying obstacles to a new future curriculums' **adoption**:

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
A	Without jobs to match the high academic qualifications, there was no point in going to the next step.	If there are almost no jobs to cater to the new EAA/T professional what is the point? No one wants to spend money unless there is monetary gain.	Organisations lack of desire to invest in improvements keeps EAA/T, and jobs for any highly qualified workers in the field to a minimum.	To have the feeling I am doing something meaningful and motivating for me and others
B	"Sitting between the chairs," means that it is problematic, in the first place to find authorities willing to deal with you. To do so, one needs to show numbers, but if the curriculum is expanded too much (as I said, here it is already more demanding than the Trainer C License) you would not have enough people willing to go for it.	Colleges control course intakes. They accept young people who are not ready for the job. They are only concerned with numbers and not quality. Colleges are passing most students (PEP) allowing the bar to be too low. Colleges accept anyone who can pay.	Even if there were changes everyone would still end up with the same job. No one wants to spend money unless there is monetary gain. I feel we kind of missed the boat as riding instructors. There is no job title.	Equestrian knowledge and skills are essential for a professional EAA/T practitioner, however, current knowledge and preparation in this matter is at a significantly lower level.

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
C	In general enforcement of standards of practice is the problem – charitable organisations like Xx, Yy, Zz can set standards, and they can ask practitioners to comply - but they really can't enforce them, plus it is simply is too costly to implement and maintain as the money is not there.	Organisations have to decide whether to move from a background of volunteerism to professionalism.	People coming out of colleges have nowhere to work. If they work in EAA/T they can't live from the job. After paying out fifty thousand dollars for training it is only possible to earn five dollars an hour.	To be able to keep track after lessons done by other practitioners in my farm.
D	Some believe that it is better to try to self-regulate than move to government control. Moving to government control, some independent control may be lost in decision-making. However, I do believe that there needs to be a scope of practice, clear expectations for EAA/T practitioners... there is a definite lack of this in my country.	There are so many registered instructors (registered level is the lowest level of instruction). No one wants to spend money unless there is a monetary gain. There are no jobs for high-level students (PEP).	There are no incentives, or self-motivation, no money in our field- it is not taken seriously, again because it is a certificate and not a degree, and there is not enough research that is conclusive. It is non-profit (volunteer-based) there are not enough reasons why we are not validated. In this country.	To finish the course and have the possibility to work in the field.

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
E	Regular riding still hasn't obtained professional status through college degrees. Not sure how long this would take to make the shift. Colleges that provide equestrian in their courses often don't have the people to teach it.	It is up to us where we want to go with this, and we are at a crossroads - enthusiastic amateurs based on the UK system, which is a bunch of enthusiastic amateurs, but now we would like to up a stage and get more professional.	To get the Kupat Holim (Medical insurance companies) to pay, we must have some with a degree. We need a degree. I think it needs to add some specialisation with the branches. We need some people to have a degree.	To receive the required knowledge for becoming a better instructor at the end of the course.
F	Right now, I believe that EAA/T is lumped under OT and PT job title. Riding instructors aren't even listed. EAA/T doesn't apply well... so is the chicken and egg... This directory is revamped every ten years I think we need to work on getting recognised there.	Without funding we cannot go to the next step to raise the bar.	There is no EAA/T practitioner profile.	Fulfillment.

Appendix 1.vii: Acquisition of Knowledge Principles of Educational Practices

Expert collective consensus cross-match with FG and IN implied responses and correlates with SQ goals and expectations for acquisition of knowledge justify the **principles of educational practice:**

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
A	A teacher has to be able to apply his or her art; college mentors must also be able to teach the components to improve the skills.	Not enough supervised practice. EAA/T needs more trained supervisors and one-to-one teaching.	Knowledge and self-awareness makes the practitioner qualified to practice.	Creative and interesting teaching.
B	Personally, for a mentor, I would be looking for someone that had at least 5-years' experience in the field and a deep working knowledge of a wide number of aspects. I would need someone that I could respect, not someone recently qualified.	The practicum is a big thing to worry about. Students (PEP) need practical experience.	More hours spent teaching students (PEP) self-awareness, and observation skills will improve teaching listening and observation skills.	To develop capabilities to understand people and help them.

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
C	Yes, all the lessons should be supervised, the practicum is a big thing to worry about and they, (students/PEP) do not get enough experience. There are many positions that you need to understand once qualified, how to take care of others and to take of the horses.	We feel like are we are left on fire, waiting to be rescued, without the vital support of experts the field.	Students (PEP) need practical experience.	To gain great satisfaction from this course, personally and professionally.
D	Ability to pay attention and be aware at all times, working from a healthy ego/non-ego, with good leadership skills and the ability to work in the best interests of the client/s and the horses, and keep the environment safe, think on one's feet and problem solve - not just cognitively but intuitively and empathically. Much of this is learnt from experience.	There should be more practical to enhance skills and vision working with horses.	Students need to know what is a relationship? What does it look like – what is the different between a therapeutic relationship and a personal relational? What is a therapeutic environment? How does one speak and goes about the day in a therapeutic riding centre? Clinical relationships, the instructor (practitioner) needs help in these areas.	To have an interesting and enriching experience.

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
E	The quality of the supervision is a basic condition to acquire thinking process and problems solving. If students (PEP) were not familiar with the basics they would not be able to think for themselves and be creative in solving problems.	Students (PEP) need one-to-one time with experienced supervisors, so as to develop and reinforce practice.	I would like to add a personal psychological prose into their therapy skills; we should have more hours, for personal projects, and riding skills. Time to see, watch and understand the current situation of the rider on the horse. More hours for self-awareness, to become better observers.	To educate myself
F	I am an occupational therapist. In our field, in order to work with students (PEP) you have to participate in a training course (experiential learning). This kind of course could be the answer for the above questions.	New graduates are thrown into the field with only a few skills.	I did a bunch of research into reflection – we had students (PEP) in the USA who could never be riding instructors (EAA/T practitioners). They could not reflect on practice and not problem solve.	To receive help from the course's staff, both in theoretical and practical studies.
G	Horsemanship itself should be about self-mastery - personal development and growth; in addition, it is the norm in any other therapeutic profession.	Increase student (PEP) awareness by increasing the number of practical hours - raising the bar.	Once a month, there should be workshops.	To get to know myself better through helping others.

Appendix 1.viii: Acquisition of Knowledge Equestrian

Expert collective consensus cross-matches with FG and IN implied responses and correlates with SQ goals and expectations for acquisition of knowledge justify **equestrian knowledge and skills:**

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
A	When developing curriculum within a college --- need to take advantage of what courses of study are already available and then tap into them. If there is an equine programme then take a course for teaching riding.	The more time spent around horses you will learn more. There are so many farms that do it wrong; you can do more damaged by one stupid person (educator) teaching another stupid person (PEP).	Competent instructors should have a basic knowledge of horse ailments thrush, colic etc. Recognise the horse's soundness, first aid treatment; and be able to describe how you do things (to take care of the horse).	To learn as much as possible about helping people with horses and to deepen the connection with the horse.
B	BHSAI or equivalent (I am in the UK) and have a riding therapy qualification. I believe all qualified hippo therapists /occupational therapists/speech language pathologists/psychologists working in the field should have a good grounding in horsemanship.	People call themselves practitioners. It is quite frightening to know how little they know about equestrian. Somewhere in the process they need to learn about equestrian skills.	It should be mandatory that equestrian skills reach an acceptable baseline level before acceptance into the programme? Physiotherapists in Germany have to ride a B test, as they have upped it quite a lot.	To gain better knowledge of the horse world (particularly therapeutic)

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
C	I believe at least one person (in the arena) should be a highly qualified horse person. For groundwork therapy, I feel there needs to be a level of expertise in natural/classical horsemanship skills so as the horses are trained to give accurate feedback? The horse facilitator should be knowledgeable and sensitive enough to hold that space, and accurately understand the feedback the horses are giving. A practitioner needs to be able to bring about safe and positive behaviour in the horse, in both riding therapy and groundwork therapy.	You are not an effective rider if you think you can get on a horse and make it do anything you want it to do without recognising that there has to be a willingness from the horse. You are never going to get this 1000-pound animal to do what you want it to do without working on relationships. Any good horseman knows that they have to work on the horse- relationship.	The gap for me in this system is that we are not strict enough about the equestrian. Intake requires a background in equestrian. It is hard to compare trainers from K and those from the north. We need a more a standardised training level of horseback riding. Equestrian must be the first course for EAA/T.	To get to know another horse riding discipline.

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
D	I think that an EAA/T practitioner must control horses from the ground, teach basic riding skills, horsemanship and be safe around horses. An EAA/T practitioner must have enough knowledge to be able to adapt the skills to the challenged rider and help him to compensate for his difficulties.	The training must provide effective horse training. If you do not have a well school horse and knowledgeable instructor you are in trouble.	Its advanced, and a lot more horsemanship knowledge and you need to know your oats. I would love to make this the entry level but it would not happen in this country.	To learn to ride in a professional manner.
E	Solid horsemanship skills are the foundation of our profession and should be a requirement. Having an agreed upon set of criteria to evaluate this component would help to standardise the expectations and minimise potential for disappointment. If this were done prior to the full certification it might also allow more focus to be on the teaching qualifications of the candidate.	They ride for 150 hours but it is not enough to be an experience instructor.	About the horse piece, I think it is ludicrous that any therapeutic riding instructor would not have sufficient equestrian.	To improve my knowledge of riding and working with horses

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
F	An accredited qualification is desirable. It will raise the entry qualifications and the level of future practitioners. This way the teaching and therapeutic skills will be higher and better.	If EAA/T practitioners do not know equestrian basics, they cannot teach the challenged rider. Without this we cannot improve the client service.	The registered level (of the practitioner) is too low and we must put some parameters around what registered level practitioners can do. I feel it should be bumped up to advanced level (Horsemanship).	To learn and understand the psychology of the horse. To understand the processes formed in therapy with horses.

Appendix 1.ix: Acquisition of Knowledge Pathologies and Manifestations

Expert collective consensus cross-matches with FG and IN implied responses and correlates with SQ goals and expectations for acquisition of knowledge justify **pathologies and manifestations**:

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
A	Paired with equine knowledge, this is the fundamental component of our work. Practitioners need to have an understanding of the specific disabilities with which they are working …they should have enough basic knowledge on the body functioning, and anatomy and pathology to be able to coop with unknown diseases.	Their (EAA/T graduates) riding skills are not good enough - they do not have enough skills to work with children with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorders (ADHD).	Students (PEP) can recognise disabilities if they are exposed to pathologies and education.	To help children and adults with pathologies.
B	Practitioners should be taught to look for the further reasons of challenge in a client's life-understand manifestations.	Theoretical knowledge, pathologies, manifestations and psychology are important.	I do think a broad general background in psychology and behaviours and other topics will help a practitioner know where and when to specialise. However, they need to be under supervision for a long time.	To learn to identify the patients' needs.

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
C	The difficulties are balancing the amount of knowledge that must be taught. I think that it is important not only to teach pathologies but also to teach the students (PEP) to be able to learn by themselves. They should have enough basically knowledge on body functioning, anatomy and pathology to be able to cope with unknown diseases.	I believe there are only five places working in Israel with physical disabilities- there are few people (EAA/T practitioners) who can work with children and adults with physical disabilities	I think it needs to be a combination of active learning from anatomy to psychology with some specialisation. Our EAA/T instructors must know manifestations of a disability well enough to describe them.	To get to know functional, emotional and physical problems and learn how to deal with them.

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
D	EAA/T can help a very wide range of special needs and conditions. I believe there should be specific modules focusing on some wide range pathologies, manifestations of diseases, disabilities and/or challenges within riding therapy, hippo-therapy and the various forms of equine assisted psychotherapy and horse assisted learning working on the ground. This would allow EAA/T students (PEP) and people already working in the industry to gain the required skills to work with specific groups i.e. CP, PTSD, Autism etc., etc., etc.	We have some quite old-fashioned thinking about disability. I think they should learn more about child development, as EAA/T practitioners need to understand the whole child.	We must be able to recognise the manifestations that demonstrate deficiencies. You are not trying to make a diagnosis you simply look at what they can do and make an analyse – e.g. is it high tone or low tone. So, the best practitioners are very good diagnosticians, as they see the person and they see everything about them. – For instance, if it is cerebral palsy (CP), I want them to recognise how it is actually affecting that person.	To help children with their pathologies.

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
E	The more knowledge in this area, the better the service provided.	You need to understand so many pathologies, you need to understand cerebral palsy (CP), psychiatric disorders as well as techniques like vaulting or hippo-therapy it is important to have basic knowledge in everything.	It does not matter what the diagnosis is. Which is very good, you are simply looking at what they can do. The best instructors are very good diagnosticians. Doctors might just say the child has Autism, but EAA/T practitioners can actually describe the symptoms. The therapist is much the same, as they also need to know how to understand the movement of the horse.	To learn theory to deepen my knowledge and understanding of different disabilities.
F	Definitely Desirable: Therapy with horses is for people with pathologies, disabilities and challenges. Students (PEP) should have knowledge in all of them.	Our course lacked getting to know more kinds of pathologies.	I think it needs to be a combination of academic learning, with everything from anatomy to psychology, and perhaps then the opportunity for increased specialisation.	To learn to acquire knowledge of problems in the human body.

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
G	It is very important for students (PEP) to know the common pathologies they may encounter as well as understanding material from other therapists. Manifestation of diseases is also very important as in EAAT we would like to have a holistic approach that touches all the aspects of the disability or difficulty.	We need to learn about disabilities, behavioural and emotional problems.	I think they have to understand the disability but more they have to know how the rider is affected by the disability and be able to understand what the rider needs at that moment and gradually go down and understand layer and layer. It needs a lot of things, a lot of knowledge. I think it is important to have background knowledge, but then it up to experience maturity and knowledge, as he or she must be able to fix the rider.	To understand child development and psychology

Appendix 1.x: Incorporation of Pedagogic Paradigms

Expert collective consensus cross-matches with FG and IN implied responses and correlates with SQ goals and expectations for **incorporation of pedagogic paradigms**

Quote Ref	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
A	After studying different models of teaching and learning processes for different clients of different backgrounds and learning challenges. I think students (PEP) need a lot of observation and discussion on top of practice under supervision and with counseling.	PBL, AL is an excellent way to encourage students (PEP) to sit together thinking through the pathology and client needs.	I think it is very important role-play. Students (PEP) benefit from the role-play. Yesterday a student (PEP) practiced being someone who has hypertonic cerebral palsy. Was a huge learning experience?	To learn how to communicate with physically or mentally disabled people.

Quote	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
B	Role play seems a good method for me, because someone has to be very clear about the situation and the type of client problems they are playing--- allowing them (PEP) to feel on their own bodies what works and what does not. I think that students need help to integrate the theoretical knowledge with the practice through teaching strategies. It is extremely important to do the connection. They must do the basic introduction to therapeutic riding (EAA/T) – I think we are trying to make them conscious incompetents. They will know when they are out of their depth. They must know enough to recognise when they need help.	The students (PEP) should be able to learn pathologies in groups then bring their new skills back to the classroom. Every group will study a different topic then they will come to the classroom and lecture to the whole group of students (PEP).	If they can identify what they should have done, they can problem solve? I think that reflection should be written down. I think we should work toward s a standard form that every course uses. Students should be educated to reflect in the course.	To learn how to approach riders with special needs correctly.
C	It depends on how someone is using his/her time. Working in the field and teaching prospective EAA/T practitioners it is essential to incorporate (experiential learning), as some students (PEP) often do not know how to provide their knowledge.	Of course, we must use problem-based learning … rote learning they do not remember anything. It is one of the best methods of learning for these students (PEP).	We have to teach in a way that we can draw it out of the person, we can get them to learn through setting problems in the classroom, which they have to find the answers to.	To learn how to communicate with children with mental deficiency

Quote	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
D	I think - a lot of observation and discussion on top of practice under supervision and with counseling. This all after studying different models of teaching and learning processes for different clients of different backgrounds and learning challenges. On understanding, teachers should become a role model of both behavior and attitude in order to set an example of how to approach tasks in the field, later to be transformed to the classroom and more.	Currently institutions and standards do not allow the development of critical thinkers and problem-solving skills. We need an area of opportunity that would provide a better base line of knowledge.	Yes, I do think that we should use techniques like problem-based learning. I believe in all this they must be able to see and get conclusions and thinking critically on their way. See the way they are working – reflecting on things – self-awareness.	To acquire therapeutic capabilities for caring for people with special needs.
E	Through training methods as mentioned above (pedagogic paradigms), as well as self-criticism and feedback. Giving the practitioners the chance to give self-feedback and observe their own work. In practice, good counseling can create this. Also, group problem solving and discussion can create this.	I do not think people will go and investigate; we need to educate people to investigate. (Critical thinkers). Sometimes we do not know how much we do not know.	We struggle with this all the time and our whole freshman emphasis is to get people to think outside the box, use real analytical skills not to take on trust and try to think it through.	To learn how to avoid damaging the patient.

Quote	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
F	The syllabus should include personal development, coaching and mentoring. In the classroom, there should be case histories of what to do in various situations, and role- playing. I think these are skills that if gained can make a therapist much better. The ability to observe, think critically and reflect is the foundation of efficient teaching as w ell as progressive therapy and a very important part in the therapist's part in a therapeutic relationship.	Some of our centres do this brilliantly they have assigned one volunteer (practitioner) to be the link to between school and the riders. They defined the clients riding goals etc. and then review them. This makes a huge difference.	Sitting in a group and talking about what we see and sharing with each other. Extremely helpful. We need professionals who know all sides to come and do this stuff with us. We do not have any proper knowledge training.	To learn how to deal with different situations with the rider.

Appendix 1.xi: Fusion and Integration

Expert collective consensus cross matches with FG and IN implied responses and correlates with SQ goals and expectations for **fusion and integration:**

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
A	Curriculum should look at best practice for teaching reflection and how to apply. Look at models such as clinical reasoning in medical field and case problems to provide scenarios to evaluate and apply suggested solutions.	A lot of young instructors are afraid to start dealing with clients as they feel they do not possess enough therapeutic tools.	You have to be able to demonstrate to students (PEP) why they have learned about normal development. It is vital to learn background information, theory that is carried over to practice.	To receive all the tools that are needed to become a suitable instructor.
B	Yes, because I think that students need help to integrate the theoretical knowledge with the practice through teaching strategies. It is extremely important to do the connection.	Closing the gaps between theory and practice and putting everything into practice.	We have to teach functional anatomy. I feel that when I give my lecture that I am just scratching the surface. Students (PEP) must be able feel the movement for themselves.	To gain satisfaction from caring and helping people by applying what I have learned.
C	Practitioners should know how to read other healthcare professionals materials and understand. This would be beneficial for the patient.	Have the tools to teach people.	We have had great practitioners but disasters in classroom.	To be able to work with children

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
D	Meeting and learning from variety of health care professionals can provide knowledge that could make students (PEP) more professional.	I am thinking about what is the balance between theory and practice. The diploma is shallow and does not provide enough theory and practice.	I am totally against writing reports- I think that the therapist is spending too much time writing reports than treating the patient. I want people to know how to treat the patient and less time on the reports.	To deeply understand the objectives of EAA/T in order to care for people.
E	Yes, so important and a great way forward.	I think it is important in the future to start the practice early to be able to deal with the techniques of EAA/T. Students (PEP) are stressed by integrating techniques, they cannot open their minds to the therapy.	The advanced level is a big jump upwards. People need to understand lateral work, (a horseback riding technique) and how to teach and demonstrate it. Our students (PEP) at registered level are not required to know this. Not everyone understands the theory or how to teach it.	To learn about methods for training the horse for therapeutic purposes.

Quote Reference	Delphi Expert (DE) Survey	Focus Groups (FG)	Interviews (IN)	Student Questionnaires (SQ)
F	From personal learning experiences, I always found listening to service users and clinicians in a teaching environment made sense of the theory.	It is not only the theoretical knowledge but also the number of hours for the practical. One always goes at the expense of the other. Theory is important to know whom you are dealing with, but then it is important to have more practical experience.	Ideally it would be great if an EAA/T practitioner had over 100 guided hours of learning with another master or advanced level practitioner then, going out in the field to return and discuss progress. Have an actual practicum and feedback like physiotherapist or occupational therapist.	To learn more about the connection between the horse and the patient.

Appendix 1.xii: Start List: Coding Focus Group Data from Transcripts

The starting list was a crucial first step in documenting FG experiences and spontaneity at that moment in time, as well as characteristics and habits, beliefs and interactions with colleagues (Stacey, 2001). The starting list design was adapted from Miles & Huberman, Starting List (Miles & Huberman, 1994, pp. 59-60).

Provisional Starting List	**Descriptive**	**Master Code +Sub Codes**	**Sum of Implied Responses**		**# Of respondents**	
			Attract	Detract	Attract	Detract
Innovation Properties	IP: Objectives (participants recognised curriculum objectives and problems connected to change)	Ip-obj	191	2	7	1
Innovation Properties	IP: Implied changes in the curriculum	IP-ch/cur	174	0	6	0
Innovation Properties	IP: Changes in the organisation (for /against relevance)	IP- ch/org	174	0	6	0
Innovation Properties	IP: User Salience	IP- salience	174	0	6	0
Innovation Properties	IP: Programme development (For/ against relevance/fit)	IP-dev	174	0	6	0
External Context	EC: Demographics (effect of characteristics/ statistics)	Ec -dem	21	26	2	4
External Context	EC: Endorsement (endorsement of academic curriculum)	Ecco-end I	21	21	2	3
External Context	EC: Endorsement by stakeholders, (national organisations, practitioners, families, medical insurances)	Ecexet-end Stak	23	30	3	5

Internal Context	IC: Characteristics (existing characteristics of the teaching programmes)	IC -char	4	142	1	7
Internal Context	IC: Norms and Authority (existing programmes and authoritative bodies)	IC- norm	4	142	1	7
Internal Context	IC: Organisation Procedures (existing organisational procedures)	IC-proc	4	142	1	7
Internal Context	IC: Innovation- organisational congruence to new programme	IC- fit	4	142	1	7
Adoption Process	AP: Readiness personal	AP redi personal	41	10	6	2
Adoption Process	AP: Centrality (possible use for all)	AP-cent	16	62	4	6
Adoption Process	AP: Motives Stakeholders, (national organisations, practitioners, families, medical insurances	AP- stakeholder	15	9	5	3
Adoption Process	AP: User fit -whether the suggested curriculum is the best fit	AP- fit	19	20	6	5
Adoption Process	AP: Readiness organisation for a shift in attitude	Ap-redi organisation	20	42	5	5
Adoption Process	AP: Critical events (history, culture, money)	Ap- crit	22	14	5	5
Site Dynamics and Transformations	EAT: Effects on organisational practices (cultural)	ET-org/prac/cult	68	4	7	1
Site Dynamics and Transformations	EAT: Effects on organisational practices (professional)	ET-org/prac/prof	68	3	7	1

Site Dynamics and Transformations	EAT: Effects on organisational climate (psychological, willingness to change)	ET-org/clim/ psy	47	3	6	1
Site Dynamics and Transformations	EAT: Effects on organisational climate (physical change)	ET-0rg/clim/ phy	68	0	7	0
Site Dynamics and Transformations	EAT: Effects on practice (raise the bar)	ET-prac/raise the bar	68	0	7	0
Site Dynamics and Transformations	EAT: Critical events (knowledge, topics, training schemes)	ETcrit/know/train/tops	68	0	7	0
Site Dynamics and Transformations	EAT: Profiling, (student intake)	ET- profile	50	0	7	0
Site Dynamics and Transformations	EAT: Programme planning and problem solving	ET- prog plan	55	0	7	0
Site Dynamics and Transformations	EAT: Critical events (equestrian, horsemanship, horse mastership)	ET-equest	68	0	7	0
Ultimate Outcomes	UO: Stabilisation of user behaviour (raising the bar)	UO-stab/behav	100	0	7	0
Ultimate Outcomes	UO: Knowledge, topics	UO- know/tops	95	0	7	0
Ultimate Outcomes	UO: Training	UO- training	95	0	7	0
Ultimate Outcomes	UO: Equestrian	UO-equestrian	47	2	6	1
Ultimate Outcomes	UO: Anticipated (Uptake)	UO-uptake	25	14	6	2
Ultimate Outcomes	UO: Spinoffs and side effects (stakeholders)	UO-spinoffs	50	6	6	1
Ultimate Outcomes	UO: Positive and negative endorsement	UO-pos/neg endor	83	7	6	1

Appendix 1.xiii: Start List: Coding Interview Data from Transcripts

The starting list was a crucial first step in documenting IN experiences and spontaneity at that moment in time, as well as characteristics and habits, beliefs and interactions with colleagues (Stacey, 2001). The starting list design was adapted from Miles & Huberman, Starting List (Miles & Huberman, 1994, pp. 59-60).

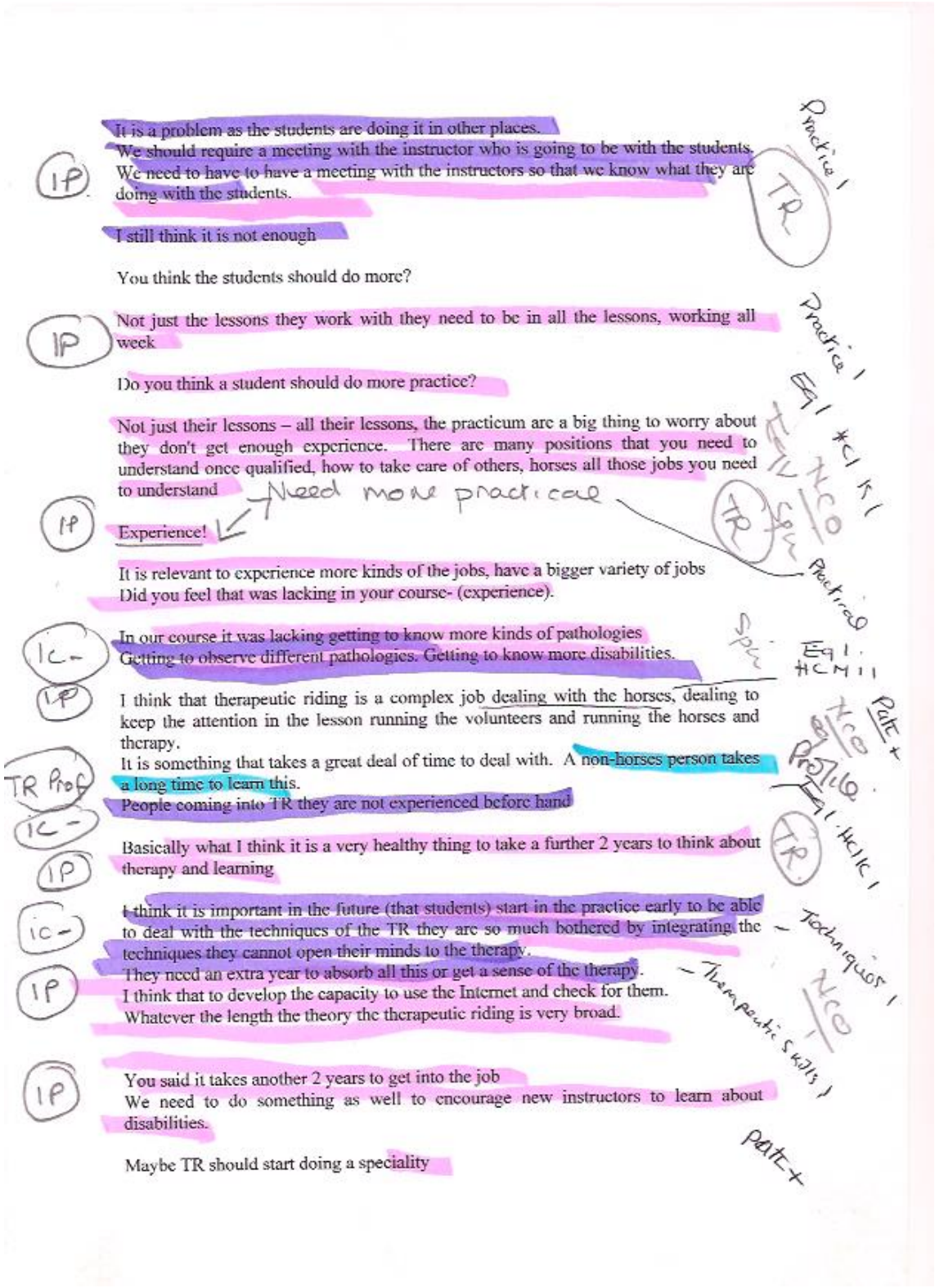
Provisional Starting List	**Coding**	**Sum of Implied Responses**		**# Of respondents**	
Innovation Properties: participants feelings concerning curriculum change	Master code +Sub codes	Attract	Detract	Att	Det
IP: Objectives (participants recognised objectives)	IP-oc	132	0	6	0
IP: Implied changes in the curriculum	IP-ch/cur	130	0	6	0
IP: Changes in the organisation (for or against relevance)	IP- ch/org	130	0	6	0
IP: User salience	IP- salience	130	0	6	0
IP: Programme development (for or against relevance)	IP-dev.	130	0	6	0
External Context: extraneous influences that could affect curriculum change	Master Code +Sub codes	Attract	Detract	Att	Det
EC: Demographics (effect of demographic, cultures, stakeholders)	Ec -dem	9	22	3	6
EC: Endorsement (endorsement of academic curriculum)	Ecexet-end Stak	0	19	0	4

EC: Endorsement by stakeholders country	Ecext: clim	2	21	2	6
Internal Context: current situation that could influence curriculum change	Master Code +Sub codes	Attract	Detract	Att	Det
IC: Characteristics (existing characteristics)	IC -char	23	42	3	4
IC: Norms and Authority (existing)	IC- norm	28	42	3	4
IC: Organisation Procedures (existing)	IC-proc	28	42	3	4
IC: Innovation- organisation congruence	IC- fit	28	40	3	5
Adoption Process: influences on the success of curriculum change	Master Code +Sub codes	Attract	Detract	Att	Det
AP: Inside/outside (personal)	AP: Inside/out personal	77	4	6	1
AP: Centrality (attitude)	AP-cent	9	37	3	6
AP: Motives Stakeholders, (clients, medical insurances)	AP- stakeholder	34	34	3	5
AP: Motives (personal)	AP- mot	35	32	4	4
AP: User fit	AP- fit	15	16	1	3
AP: Motives (organisational)	AP- mot org	19	20	3	4
AP: Readiness (both organisational /personal)	Ap-redi	6	19	2	5
AP: Critical events (history, culture, money)	Ap- crit	3	30	1	6
Site Dynamics and Transformations: effect of curriculum change	Master Code +Sub codes	Attract	Detract	Att	Det
EAT: Effects on organisational practices (cultural)	ET-org/prac/cult	110	5	6	3
EAT: Effects on organisations practices (professional)	ET-org/prac/prof	110	5	6	2
EAT: Effects on organisational climate (psychological, willingness to change)	ET-org/clim/ psy	110	5	6	3
EAT: Effects on organisational climate (physical change)	ET-0rg/clim/ phy	110	5	6	3

EAT: Effects on practice (raise the bar)	ET-prac/raise the bar	110	11	6	3
EAT: Critical events (knowledge, topics, training schemes, knowledge of disability, and has the ability to describing symptoms)	ET-crit/know/train/tops	79	0	6	0
EAT: Profiling, (student intake)	ET- profile	36	0	6	0
ET: Programme planning problem solving, critical thinking, reflection, observation skills, self-awareness,	ET- prog plan	51	0	4	0
ET: critical events (equestrian, horsemanship, horse mastership)	ET-equest	110	6	6	1
Ultimate Outcomes: suggested findings from participants after curriculum change	Master code +Sub codes	Attract	Detract	Att	Det
UO: Stabilisation of user behaviour, national standardisation, credentials, national exams	UO-stab/behaviour	105	0	6	0
UO: Stabilisation of EAA/T basic training	UO- train	105	0	6	0
UO: Academic Knowledge, Education, Specialisation	UO- acad know. /spec	105	0	6	0
UO: Improved and required equestrian skills and horsemanship to riding instructor level	UO-improve equest skill	105	0	6	0
UO: Task analysis, programme planning problem solving, critical thinking, reflection, observation skills, self-awareness	UO -task anal	105	8	6	1
UO: Anticipated profile change, potential new career structure, recognition of professionalism	UO-profile change	107	2	6	1
UO: Research carried out by EAA/T professional/ university	UO- research	107	0	6	0
UO: Spinoffs and side effects, positive endorsement (stakeholders, parents, medical insurances, governing bodies, improved lecturing skills)	UO-spinoffs	107	2	6	1
UO: Raising the bar	UO-raising bar	86	0	5	0
UO: In-service training, mentoring, coaching	UO- insert train	107	8	6	2

Appendix 1.xiv: Original Colour Coded, Focus Group (FG6)

Transcript data before transferred to the starting lists.



It is a problem as the students are doing it in other places.
We should require a meeting with the instructor who is going to be with the students.
We need to have to have a meeting with the instructors so that we know what they are doing with the students.

I still think it is not enough

You think the students should do more?

Not just the lessons they work with they need to be in all the lessons, working all week

Do you think a student should do more practice?

Not just their lessons – all their lessons, the practicum are a big thing to worry about they don't get enough experience. There are many positions that you need to understand once qualified, how to take care of others, horses all those jobs you need to understand

Need more practicals

Experience!

It is relevant to experience more kinds of the jobs, have a bigger variety of jobs
Did you feel that was lacking in your course- (experience).

In our course it was lacking getting to know more kinds of pathologies
Getting to observe different pathologies. Getting to know more disabilities.

I think that therapeutic riding is a complex job dealing with the horses, dealing to keep the attention in the lesson running the volunteers and running the horses and therapy.
It is something that takes a great deal of time to deal with. A non-horses person takes a long time to learn this.
People coming into TR they are not experienced before hand

Basically what I think it is a very healthy thing to take a further 2 years to think about therapy and learning

I think it is important in the future (that students) start in the practice early to be able to deal with the techniques of the TR they are so much bothered by integrating the techniques they cannot open their minds to the therapy.
They need an extra year to absorb all this or get a sense of the therapy.
I think that to develop the capacity to use the Internet and check for them.
Whatever the length the theory the therapeutic riding is very broad.

You said it takes another 2 years to get into the job
We need to do something as well to encourage new instructors to learn about disabilities.

Maybe TR should start doing a speciality

Once a month for study- workshops
The notion of professional advisor for the new instructor is a main issue - this is what we are trying to do in the committee.
Or a couple of times a month for workshops.

Hebrew

She thinks that it would be important to have practitioner positions

Do you think we should integrate more with the medical/educationalist?

Yes of course

Hebrew

The problem is that we are trying to do and that people don't feel comfortable with their practice.
You are the ones doing the therapy and
I don't think it is realist to have DR following us work. We have to understand the language; they cannot read a medical form that is sent.
I don't that we need a more experienced medical educational practitioner to follow the new practitioner.
I don't think that we need to be surrounded by Med/Ed
Do you think we should be isolated?

NO

Hebrew

Do practitioners know what horses do when they send them to TR?

I think it would be good for people to learn how to investigate; we need to educate people to investigate.
In the first year or two you can make some sort of obligation to learning more
Sometimes we don't know how much we don't know some times it is not built in every body to be curious
Some times it is overwhelming

To build into the curriculum that someone TR------ Need to make this sentence clear

It (learning) improves during the course and when they finish their studies and seem to need more. (However) it peeks then after a few years it goes.
It is very worrying

I am thinking about what is the balance between the amount of time and all the subjects that have to get in (learned) and the enough information so that it (the course) won't be too shallow
The diploma is shallow it has to ------- also practical and theory,

What about the doctors and what about the students-- can ask questions where can they go to ask questions

The length of the course is controlled by the colleges, they want to do one years courses they are concerned with numbers and not quality.

Where we are at now- we are on a year- course.
We are on a year-course. One day with the riding and one day with the theory.

I think if they want to ride or ride well they need to take more riding lessons.

What do you feel about equestrian in the course?

Hebrew
It is important to ride

Hebrew-[redacted]
I think it would be wonderful if we could make it an expectation that they have a riding qualification.

In New Jersey USA there is a degree course for equine studies they are forced to become a riding instructor.
Went you come to the therapeutic riding they come with a very strong base as they have studied equine for 4 years. (Only 10 on the course)

Maybe we take ½ year and teach them riding and how to teach riding and then after you finish then practice and then do the theory.

In this course – they started the riding 150 hours, but it is not enough. It's not enough to be an experienced instructor

Hebrew[redacted]

Hebrew[redacted]

The problem is that they are on such a low level of riding they are not going to come. We tell them that they are not always going to pass.

Hebrew[redacted]

This is what was said to Netta a student - come and ride, come and ride. But she did not.

Hebrew

[redacted]

We have done some of our work with Nativim on the course --- lack of understanding from the course. I think that if the practical went along with the theory it would be more meaningful.
They (the EAA/T students) learnt from the head of the school but they did not learn enough. The practical needs to go along with more theory and be connected to each kid.

I think that we need more time of the practical. More time for the preparation gives less a lot of discussion in the practical. They need a clearer idea.

They need to practice they should practice every day.
Hebrew

We learn about ADHD theoretically on the course and then did the practical
Do you think even if you have had a fantastic teacher it would that have helped you?
NO – there is a theory about the subject – you need supervision, need supervised for more in the 1st year.
Also we should have supervision during the practice during the practical.
(Suggesting we need more highly qualified educators)

There are gaps between the theory and practice and putting (everything) into practice
It has to be with all the different pathologies-
When the students go somewhere else to do their practical they do their own thing in other places. They pretty well do what is comfortable for them.
What about the logbook, **which is more, supervised.**
The students have their logbook and take it with them to whatever place they are going to do their supervised practice. They are responsible.

A student told me that if you were serious you would go and find an instructor who will teach you, and if not you will find someone just to sign the paper.

Maybe we should authorise specific people that we know they will take the responsibility seriously.
It is hard to go out of intra- we don't know what is going on.
They have been allowed this year – to people that we trust.
I think it should be to specific instructors – there should be a clinic to be a supervisor.

The issue is not to let them choose. We much do a list of places maybe not a list of instructors- they need to be rewarded.
They do this as a volunteer, the colleges don't pay the supervisors.
Some colleges have given money for 1 hour of supervision.

How do our students to connect more to the medical insurances / stakeholders

Hebrew

In the curriculum we are not teaching them enough about that they are going to work with an employer.
Should we be training them?

So Anita it depends whether we are talking about the real course or a theoretical course.

What are we going to do about it – there is a huge difference between the real course and the theoretical course

Hebrew

[redacted]

[redacted]

People come back over and over again who want to pass and are not prepared to learn.

Discussing about students who cannot pass.

Another question

The way we actually we teaching in the classroom, we are trying to teach through problem-based learning.

Do you think this method is going to help or do you think we stick to a method of rope learning?

I think this one of the best methods for our work, the students can sit together thinking through all night and I think this is a great way to learn

It is one of the best methods of learning for these students

Assessment – do you think that assessments are good?

Hebrew

What do you feel about exams?
We must have exams, we-------

Hebrew

[redacted]and all.

[redacted]

Do you think that the subjects that they learn, or do you think we should choose different one.

Hebrew

We need to special education and psychology

Of course

Appendix 2

Appendix 2.i: Delphi Research Module 1: Student Questionnaires (SQ)

This questionnaire was optional and answered with anonymity. Prospective EAA/T practitioners (PEP) in Israel were asked if they would fill in the questionnaire on the first and last day of the EAA/T course. In Israel, EAA/T is still commonly referred to as Therapeutic Riding (TR); therefore, this more familiar terminology was used in the title of the questionnaire to guide new prospective EAA/T practitioners.

Student Questionnaire (SQ)

Therapeutic Riding Practitioner Diploma Course
in Equine Assisted Activities / Therapy

Introduction:

This questionnaire is part of an ongoing doctoral research investigation by Anita Shkedi, a doctoral student at the University of Derby, UK, designed to assess the current EAA/T curricula referred to as therapeutic riding in Israel.

The Rationale:

The rationale of the questionnaire is to gather information in Israel from prospective EAA/T practitioners, also referred to as Therapeutic Riding (TR) instructors, which could help determine the extent to which current educational practices prepare EAA/T practitioners for providing the most comprehensive, effective and progressive treatment for the physically and mentally challenged. My intent is to improve EAA/T practitioners' professionalism by identifying any systemic gaps in the current EAA/T curriculum. The questionnaire is part of the research where unbiased criteria, ideas and insights regarding the perceived ideal curriculum are gathered before proceeding into a more in-depth investigation.

General Questions for TR Student Questionnaire (SQ)

Do you have previous experience volunteering at a Therapeutic Riding centre? If so please describe.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Describe in as much detail as possible six expectations/ goals you have for yourself as a student in this course.

a._____

_____

_____

b._____

_____

_____

c._____

_____

_____

d._____

_____

_____

e._____

_____

_____

f._____

_____

_____

Therapeutic Riding Practitioners Curriculum Questions

Listed below are questions asked about various topics in the current Therapeutic Riding Curriculum. To ensure a common understanding of what each topic includes a brief description can be found on page 9.

Please review these descriptions before deciding how important each topic is for the Therapeutic Riding Curriculum.

On a scale of 0-5 how important do you think it is to include these topics in the Therapeutic Riding Practitioners (EAA/T practitioner) Curriculum? Each topic has three questions; please circle the number that you think symbolises the important of including the topic in the Therapeutic Riding Curriculum.

Example:

Circle the number in the boxes that you think is most appropriate.

Topic The English language SAMPLE						
1 – Not at all, 2-Fairly important, 3 – Important, 4 – Very important, 5 - Must be included/ Extremely important						
1	How important is it to study the English Language?	1	2	3	4	5

Questionnaire

As a therapeutic riding practitioner, how important is it to study the following topics?

Please answer the questions written below.

Topic 01 Living and Functional Anatomy that includes Neuro-anatomy						
1 – Not at all, 2-Fairly important, 3 – Important, 4 – Very important, 5 - Must be included/ Extremely important						
1	How do you feel about studying living and functional anatomy?	1	2	3	4	5
2	Have you found it important to prepare yourself in advance for this subject, for instance by reading material in books or on the internet?	1	2	3	4	5
3	Do you have inherent interest in this topic?	1	2	3	4	5
Topic 02 Normal Child Development						
1 – Not at all, 2- Fairly important, 3 – Important, 4 – Very important, 5 - Must be included/ Extremely important						
4	How do you feel about the learning the subject of normal child development?	1	2	3	4	5
5	Do you think that this subject is important for your therapeutic riding studies?	1	2	3	4	5
6	Was preparing in advance by "reading material in books or on the internet" essential before taking this course?	1	2	3	4	5
Topic 03 Sensory Motor Development						
1 – Not at all, 2- Fairly important, 3 – Important, 4 – Very important, 5 - Must be included/ Extremely important						
7	How do you feel about studying sensory motor development?	1	2	3	4	5
8	Is it important for you to understand the development and the value of the human reflexes?	1	2	3	4	5
9	Is it important for you to understand normal child development?	1	2	3	4	5
Topic 04 Child Developmental Psychology						
1 – Not at all, 2- Fairly important, 3 – Important, 4 – Very important, 5 - Must be included/ Extremely important						
10	How do you feel about studying developmental psychology?	1	2	3	4	5
11	Do you think it is important to study and understand the psychological changes that occur in the course of a child's life?	1	2	3	4	5

12	Do you think learning about the different ways humans acquire knowledge is an important part of a therapeutic riding course?	1	2	3	4	5
Topic 05 Cognitive Child Psychology						
1 – Not at all, 2-Fairly important, 3 – Important, 4 – Very important, 5 - Must be included/ Extremely important						
13	How do you feel about learning specific learning theories that are related to a child's cognitive development?	1	2	3	4	5
14	Do feel it is important to study how people acquire, process and store information?	1	2	3	4	5
15	Do you feel it is important to understand how people think, perceive, remember, and learn?	1	2	3	4	5
Topic 06 Physical and Psychological Pathologies						
1 – Not at all, 2-Fairly important, 3 – Important, 4 – Very important, 5 - Must be included/ Extremely important						
16	Do you feel that it is important to study various disabilities otherwise known as physical and psychological pathologies?	1	2	3	4	5
17	Do you feel that knowing the course of various diseases will have any significance impact upon your practical experience?	1	2	3	4	5
18	Before coming to the course had you already looked up various disabilities on the internet?	1	2	3	4	5
Topic 07 Theoretical Skills						
1 – Not at all, 2-Fairly important, 3 – Important, 4 – Very important, 5 - Must be included/ Extremely important						
19	Do you think that it is necessary to have theoretical understanding of therapeutic riding?	0	1	2	3	4	5
20	How important do you feel it is to learn management skills that teach you how to make important decisions related to therapeutic riding procedure.	0	1	2	3	4	5
21	Do you feel that theoretical knowledge will help you deal effectively with the realities that occur during therapeutic riding practice?	0	1	2	3	4	5
Topic 08 Principles and Practices of Therapeutic Riding and Equine Assisted Activities Therapy						
1 – Not at all, 2-Fairly important, 3 – Important, 4 – Very important, 5 - Must be included/ Extremely important						

22	Do you feel that it is important to study the principles and practices of Therapeutic Riding that include Equine Assisted Therapy?	0	1	2	3	4	5
23	How important is it to learn how to engage with clients, families, medical insurances, and others 'employers' and 'stakeholders' (family doctor, psychologist)?	0	1	2	3	4	5
24	Do you think it is important to study in a situation where you see the highest standards of security for yourself and the client?	0	1	2	3	4	5
Topic 09 Therapeutic Riding in Education							
1 – Not at all, 2-Fairly important, 3 – Important, 4 – Very important, 5 - Must be included/ Extremely important							
25	Do you think it is important to have a level of critical thinking for the course?	0	1	2	3	4	5
26	Do you like the idea of learning in groups to solve problems and reflect upon personal experiences?	0	1	2	3	4	5
27	Do you think you should be taught teaching and coaching skills?	0	1	2	3	4	5
Topic 010 Practical Skills							
1 – Not at all, 2-Fairly important, 3 – Important, 4 – Very important, 5 - Must be included/ Extremely important							
28	Do you think that practical experience is the primary site of learning for the workplace?	0	1	2	3	4	5
29	Is it important for you to give the most hours to this part of the curriculum?	0	1	2	3	4	5
30	Do you feel that learning practical skills will make you a more balanced therapeutic riding instructor?	0	1	2	3	4	5
Topic 011 Equestrian Skills							
1 – Not at all, 2- Fairly important, 3 – Important, 4 - Very important, 5- Must be included/ Extremely important							
31	Do you feel you have sufficient equestrian skills that including horseback riding?	0	1	2	3	4	5
32	Have you pre-prepared yourself for the course by gaining knowledge of horse care and management skills?	0	1	2	3	4	5

33	Do you feel that you must have a basic knowledge in equestrian and horseback riding to be a professional therapeutic riding practitioner?	0	1	2	3	4	5
Topic 012 Practicum							
1 – Not at all, 2- Fairly important, 3 – Important, 4 - Very important, 5- Must be included/ Extremely important							
34	How important is it for you to get a realistic sense of therapeutic riding practice?	0	1	2	3	4	5
35	Do you think it is important to have your practicum supervised at all times?	0	1	2	3	4	5
36	How important is it to experience a diverse range of roles and responsibilities at a therapeutic riding centre?	0	1	2	3	4	5

Questions Related to Hours of Study	Number of Hours
How many hours should be dedicated to functional and neuro - anatomy?	
How many hours should be dedicated to normal development?	
How many hours should be dedicated to sensory motor development?	
How many hours should be dedicated to child development psychology?	
How many hours should be dedicated to child cognitive psychology?	
How many hours should be dedicated to physical and psychological pathologies?	
How many hours should be dedicated to theoretical skills?	
How many hours should be dedicated to principles and practices of therapeutic riding?	
How many hours should be dedicated to the role of therapeutic riding in education?	
How many hours should be dedicated to practical experience?	
How many hours should be dedicated to equestrian skills?	
How many hours should be dedicated to practicum?	

Did you expect to see these topics in the therapeutic riding practitioners course?

__Yes __No. If no, please explain_____

Do you feel that there are other topics necessary for this curriculum?

__Yes __No. If yes, please explain_____

Do you feel that any of the above topics are unnecessary?

__Yes __No. If yes, please state _____

Therapeutic Riding Practitioners Course Topic Information

(Information provided at the end of the questionnaire)

1. Living Functional Anatomy including Neuro-anatomy

Living anatomy is the structure and function of the body in its living state. It is the study of: our skeletal system that protects the vital organs and gives attachments to muscles; of muscles and joints that provide for movement between the various skeletal units; of the highly specialised cardiovascular system through which oxygen and nutrients are pumped to individual cells of the body and waste materials are collected for excretion; of the various organs within the head and neck, thorax and abdomen which enable the viability of the body by ensuring continuity of the species; and of the nervous system which receives and integrates information from both the internal and external environments and which, through our speech, movement, and behaviour, enables us to express our individual character and personality.

Neuro-anatomy is a branch of neuroscience that deals with the study of gross structure of the brain and the nervous system. In humans, neuro-anatomy studies the routes that a myriad of nerves taken from the brain to the rest of the body (or "periphery"), and the extremely elaborate internal structure of the brain. ***Neuro-anatomy*** gives us an understanding of how distinct regions of the brain function. It is central to our knowledge of how lesions on specific brain areas affect behaviour and other neural functions. For example, a person experiences a car accident and suffers a serious brain injury. The manifestation of this catastrophic injury is that he/she is no longer able to speak clearly, and cannot move an arm or leg well. The study of Neuro-anatomy provides students with supporting knowledge of normal functional ability that facilitates a measured understanding of the complexity of brain damage and dysfunction.

2. Normal Child Development

Human development is the process of growing to maturity. In biological terms, this entails growth from a one-celled zygote to an adult. Generally during childhood, development is described as milestones of normal development. These milestones, or stages of development, will vary according to genetic, cognitive, physical, family, cultural, nutritional, educational, and environmental factors. The study of normal development includes the study of physical, motor, psychological, cognitive, social and language development.

3. Sensory Motor Development

Sensory motor development is the ability for physical movement to change from the largely reflexive, unlearned involuntary movement patterns of a new born baby, to the highly skilled voluntary movement characteristics found later in life when the baby has flourished, grown and matured into a child, adolescent or an adult.

The speed of motor development is rapid in early life, as many of the reflexes of the new born alter or disappear within the first year of life, and sometimes a little later. In some circumstances the reflexes remain with us throughout our lives as a permanent protection mechanism (example: knee jerk response).

4. Child Developmental Psychology

Developmental psychology systematically studies psychological changes that occur in humans over the course of their life span. Child development psychology studies a broad range of topics that are concerned with infant and child development. These include motor skills and other psycho- physiological processes, cognitive development involving such areas as problem solving, conceptual understanding, language acquisition, social and emotional development, self-concept, and identity formation. It includes issues such as the extent to which development occurs through the gradual accumulation of knowledge versus stage-like development, or the extent to which children are born with innate mental structures versus learning experience, commonly known as the nature – nurture argument. This course will specifically cover the work of psychologist Piaget.

5. Cognitive Psychology

Cognitive psychology is the branch of psychology that studies mental processes including how people think, perceive, remember, and learn. As part of the larger field of cognitive science, this branch of psychology is related to other disciplines including neuroscience, philosophy, and linguistics. The core focus of cognitive psychology is on how people acquire, process and store information. Unfortunately, this process can be distorted or interrupted by crises or problems in early socialisation of an infant, child, or adolescent. This is extremely well explained in Erikson's theory of the eight stages of psychological development. Erikson, a prominent psychologist and psychoanalyst, explains how early socialisation and crises can negatively impact cognitive development of a health developing human passing from infancy to late adulthood**.** He suggests that at each stage a person confronts and hopefully masters, new challenges. Each stage builds on useful completion of earlier stages. If the challenges of the stages are not successfully completed, then they may reappear as problems in the future.

6. Physical and Psychological Pathologies encountered in the Therapeutic Riding Programme

Physical and psychological human pathologies are better known as diseases, or abnormal medical conditions that impair bodily functions associated with specific signs and symptoms. Disease is a term that often refers to injuries, disabilities, disorders, syndromes, deviant behaviours and more. Pathologies may be caused by external factors, such as infectious disease, or it may be caused by internal dysfunctions, such as abnormalities of the autoimmune system, for instance thyroid disease.

Examples of some of the Physical and Psychological Pathologies studied are: Cerebral Palsy, Developmental Co-ordination Dysfunction, Multiple Sclerosis, Traumatic Brain Injury, Cerebral Vascular Accident. Various Learning disabilities: Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorders, ASD, and Genetic Disorders.

7. Therapeutic Skills

Acquiring therapeutic skills are central to learning how to work as a successful therapeutic riding practitioner. Therapeutic riding is a client-oriented approach to health care that is able to complement the success of conservative medicine. Therapeutic skills

are a process whereby a therapist influences the client to gain a better understanding of them through verbal or nonverbal communication. Therapeutic communication involves the use of specific strategies that encourages the client, to express feelings and ideas that convey acceptance and respect.

Therapeutic skills offer the therapeutic riding practitioner the opportunity to develop a communicating relationship with their clients (challenged and disabled riders) enhancing client healing during their time in and out of the horse environment.

During the course, you will learn: personal therapeutic skills, how to build therapeutic environmental skills, teaching techniques, behavioural management strategies, lesson planning, observation and evaluation.

You will have the opportunity to understand why you wish to be a therapeutic riding practitioner, what the aims are of your practice, and how to teach and manage different behaviour strategies especially designed for challenged learners.

8. Principal and Practices of Therapeutic Riding

Principals of therapeutic practice commonly apply to ethical issues, which ensures that practitioners act in the best interest of the client. Principals of practice are discussed and carried out to ensure that no harm comes to the client and that clients are treated with dignity. Principles of practice ensure that there are no predatory practices, and that the highest standards are maintained. Principals of practice guarantees that practitioners are qualified, and centres reach highest level of safety standards for horses and humans.

- Principals of Practice of Therapeutic Riding include the following topics:
- The historical view of Therapeutic Riding as an equine assisted activity
- The possible areas of specialisation within the field
- The international and national standards of therapeutic riding practice
- How to practice safe therapeutic riding at a therapeutic riding centre
- Understanding the Human - Horse bond
- Learning what it is like to be a disabled rider, their thoughts, feeling and wishes
- Learning what it is like to be able bodied and then become disabled
- Learning what it is like to ride as a disabled rider, riding for the first time
- Elements of a Therapeutic Riding Session

- How to plan a basic session for a challenged rider
- How to carry out different mounting and dismounting practices, leading and side walking
- Matching the completeness and complexity of the horse's movement to the movement of the rider
- To learn how the rhythmic movement of the horse influences the movement and all functional skills of the rider
- To understand how to use ground work techniques with a therapy horse to treat a challenged rider
- The benefits and contra-indications of therapeutic riding
- The Therapeutic Riding Centre must
- Build a safe riding centre
- Understand the needs of the volunteer
- Know how to train a volunteer
- Know the legal requirements for volunteers
- Know how to take care of all a therapeutic riding horses needs
- Choose a horse for therapeutic riding
- Train a horse for therapeutic riding
- Schedule a horse for therapeutic riding
- Understanding the psychology and sensibility of a horse for therapeutic riding
- Fully understand horse care and management of the older horse
- Need basic knowledge of the conformation, muscles and movement
- Know the respiratory system and the digestive system of the horse
- Understand nutrition of older horses
- Recognise lameness and unevenness
- Know basic medical requirements
- Recognise minor ailments
- The role of the blacksmith
- Ethics and codes of practice for horses and humans

9. The Role of Therapeutic Riding in Education

Therapeutic riding plays a unique role in education. It supports inclusion of special learners in the classroom, by using teaching techniques that include the use of the unique properties of the horse itself and classical riding skills that support and enhance skills needed by a special learner in a regular classroom.

The horse is an excellent motivator and is a special educator through its relational communication and non-verbal communication capabilities, developing Meta-communication, body awareness, and body skills.

Therapeutic riding provides a thinking/-learning situation that builds in special learner Meta cognition and locus of control. This control can then be transported back into the classroom situation facilitating the learning process. It guides the learner in achieving self-regulation and management.

This course will engage in problem-based learning, PBL, a student-centred instructional strategy in which students collaboratively solve problems and reflect on their experiences.

The course uses active learning, AL that is an umbrella term for several models of instruction, which focus the responsibility of the learning on learners.

10. Practical Experience

A practical experience is an experiential learning opportunity that provides students with an opportunity to observe and ask questions about real-life situations that occur on site at the therapeutic riding centre. It provides the opportunity for the EAA/T practitioner to understand what affect s/he has on the horse and rider and how the horse and rider perceive the EAA/T practitioner. Supervised practice and training provides the EAA/T practitioner with the opportunity to apply course knowledge to practice in a real-life setting. Practical experiences are external studies that combine classroom knowledge with real-world experience preparing the EAA/T practitioner for the transition from the training school to a career in therapeutic riding.

Practical experience provides EAA/T practitioners with new therapeutic and educational tools, motivating them to provide the best therapeutic practice. Practical experience at the Therapeutic riding centre, which is the workplace, (Work-based Learning, WBL) is the

primary site of learning, providing opportunity for practical application of knowledge and skills through action or problem-based projects.

11. Equine and Horseback Riding Instruction

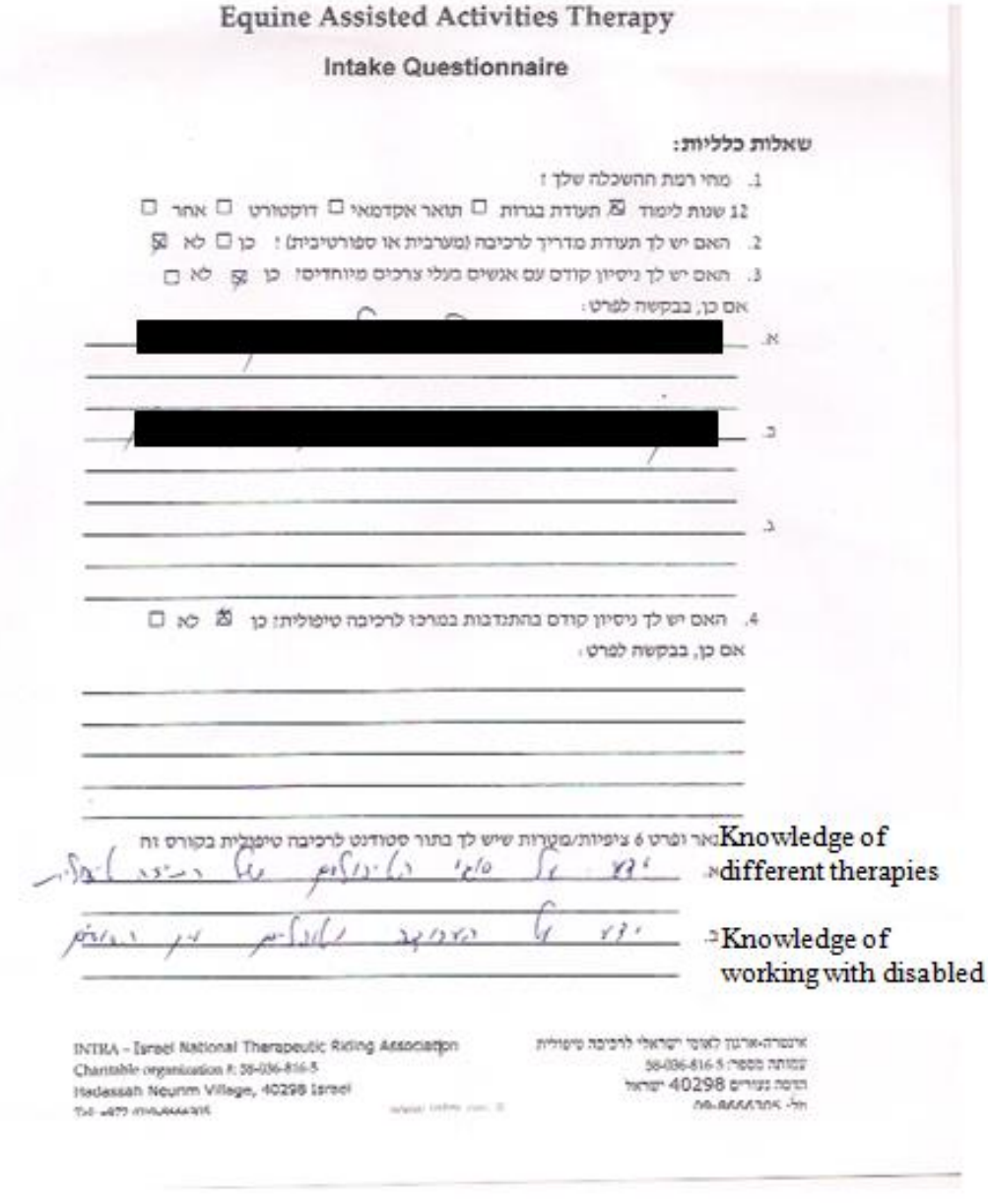
This is a course of basic equestrian skills that teach the student practitioners horseback skills and the principles of horse care and management working under supervision. The student must learn to look after a well-mannered horse in and outside of the stable. He /she must be able to ride a well-mannered horse in an enclosed space showing that he/she can control the horse in all three gaits- walk, trot, and canter.

As part of the course in horse care and management, the student practitioner gains knowledge of different types of horses, their breeds, senses, and behaviour. The student learns how to take care of horses in sickness and health. They learn the horses' daily routines, feeding programmes, and types of feed. They learn how to select a suitable horse for a riding programme and have a basic knowledge of training and keeping a horse fit.

The student practitioner learns how to mount and dismount a horse, and how to instruct others. They learn how to lunge a horse through all three gaits- walk, trot and canter. They learn safe riding positions, and then pass on this knowledge and other equestrian skills through a variety of teaching methodologies to their riders.

Appendix 2.ii: Hebrew Version of Student Questionnaire and Answers (SQ Hebrew)

Original English version found in Appendix, 2.i



Equine Assisted Activities Therapy

Intake Questionnaire

שאלות כלליות:

1. מהי רמת ההשכלה שלך ?

☐ אחר ☐ דוקטורט ☐ תואר אקדמאי ☐ תעודת בגרות ☒ 12 שנות לימוד

2. האם יש לך תעודת מדריך לרכיבה (מערבית או ספורטיבית) ? כן ☐ לא ☒

3. האם יש לך ניסיון קודם עם אנשים בעלי צרכים מיוחדים? כן ☒ לא ☐

אם כן, בבקשה לפרט:

א. [redacted]

ב. [redacted]

ג.

4. האם יש לך ניסיון קודם בהתנדבות בטרכז לרכיבה טיפולית? כן ☒ לא ☐

אם כן, בבקשה לפרט:

ציין ופרט 6 ציפיות/מטרות שיש לך בתור סטודנט לרכיבה טיפולית בקורס זה

א. Knowledge of different therapies

ב. Knowledge of working with disabled

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ג. _To study horsemanship

ד. _To know how to write lesson plans for EAA/T

ה. _To know how to write lesson plans

ו. _To work with challenged riders who have severe disabilities

השאלות הבאות יעסקו בנושאים שונים הקשורים לסילבוס הקורס

כסטודנט לרכיבה טיפולית כמה יהיה חשוב עבורך ללמוד את הנושאים הבאים

שם הקורס : אנטומיה						
1 = לא חשוב בכלל, 2 = די חשוב, 3= חשוב, 4 = יש לכלול בתוכנית הלימודים, 5 = חשוב מאד						
.1	איך את/ה מרגיש/ה לגבי לימוד הנושא - אנטומיה ?	1	2	3	4	(5)
.2	האם את/ה חושב/ת שיש להתכונן מראש לקראת לימוד נושא זה? למשל על ידי קריאת ספרות בנושא או באינטרנט	1	2	(3)	4	5
.3	האם נושא זה בעל ערך לעתיד עבורך?	1	2	3	4	(5)
שם הקורס : התפתחות נורמאלית						
1 = לא חשוב בכלל, 2 = די חשוב, 3= חשוב, 4 = יש לכלול בתוכנית הלימודים, 5 = חשוב מאד						
.4	איך את/ה מרגיש/ה לגבי לימוד הנושא - התפתחות הנורמאלית והאב נורמאלית?	1	2	3	4	5
.5	האם את/ה חושב/ת שנושא זה הכרחי בקורס מטפלים ברכיבה?	1	2	3	4	5
.6	האם את/ה חושב/ת שיש להתכונן מראש לקראת לימוד נושא זה? למשל על ידי קריאת ספרות בנושא או באינטרנט	1	2	3	4	5
שם הקורס : המערכת המוטורית החושית						
1 = לא חשוב בכלל, 2 = די חשוב, 3= חשוב, 4 = יש לכלול בתוכנית הלימודים, 5 = חשוב מאד						
.7	איך את/ה מרגיש/ה לגבי לימוד הנושא – המערכת החושית המוטורית?	1	2	3	4	(5)
.8	האם את/ה מרגיש/ה שחשוב עבורך לחבין את הקשר בין ההתפתחות המוטורית החושית לתפקוד הגופני ובעיות ברפלקסים?	1	2	3	4	(5)
.9	עד כמה חשוב לך לחבין את תפקיד ותפקוד הרפלקסים בהתפתחות האדם הרגיל?	1	2	3	4	(5)

שם הקורס: פסיכולוגיה התפתחותית						
1 = לא חשוב בכלל, 2 = די חשוב, 3= חשוב, 4 = יש לכלול בתוכנית הלימודים, 5 = חשוב מאד						
.10	איך את/ה מרגיש/ה לגבי לימוד הנושא – פסיכולוגיה התפתחותית?	1	2	3	4	(5)
.11	עד כמה חשוב לך ללמוד ולהבין את השינויים הפסיכולוגיים המתרחשים במהלך חייו של הילד?	1	2	3	4	(5)
.12	האם את/ה חושב/ת שלמידה איך בני אדם רוכשים ידע היא חלק חשוב של קורס הרכיבה הטיפולית?	1	2	3	4	(5)
שם הקורס : פסיכולוגיה קוגניטיבית						
1 = לא חשוב בכלל, 2 = די חשוב, 3= חשוב, 4 = יש לכלול בתוכנית הלימודים, 5 = חשוב מאד						
.13	איך את/ה מרגיש/ה לגבי לימוד תיאוריות למידה ספציפיים הקשורים בהתפתחות הקוגניטיבית של הילד?	1	2	3	4	(5)
.14	האם אתה מרגיש שזה חשוב ללמוד כיצד אנשים רוכשים, ומאכסנים מידע?	1	2	3	4	(5)
.15	הם את/ה חושב שזה חשוב להבין איך אנשים חושבים, תופסים, זוכרים ולומדים?	1	2	3	4	(5)
שם הקורס : פתולוגיות פיזיות ופסיכולוגיות						
1 = לא חשוב בכלל, 2 = די חשוב, 3= חשוב, 4 = יש לכלול בתוכנית הלימודים, 5 = חשוב מאד						
.16	האם את/ה מרגיש/ה כי חשוב ללמוד ולהכיר מוגבלויות שונות הידועות גם בשם " מחלות פיזיות ופסיכולוגיות"?	1	2	3	4	(5)
.17	האם את/ה מרגיש/ה כי להכרת מהלכן של מחלות שונות תהיה השפעה משמעותית על הניסיון המעשי שלך?	1	2	3	4	(5)
.18	האם את/ה מרגיש/ה שזה חשוב להגיע לקורס עם ידע קודם על מוגבלויות שונות?	1	2	(3)	4	5
עקרונות וכללים של מתודולוגיית EAA/T (תחומים שונים ברכיבה הטיפולית)						
1 = לא חשוב בכלל, 2 = די חשוב, 3= חשוב, 4 = יש לכלול בתוכנית הלימודים, 5 = חשוב מאד						
.19	האם את/ה חושב/ת שזה הכרחי לקבל הבנה תיאורטית של הרכיבה הטיפולית?	1	2	3	4	(5)
.20	עד כמה חשוב את/ה חושב/ת ללמוד מיומנויות ניהול, כאלה שיעזרו לך לקבל החלטות חשובות הקשורות בחלק הרכיבה הטיפולית?	1	2	3	4	(5)
.21	האם את/ה מרגיש/ה כי ידע תיאורטי יעזור לך להתמודד ביעילות עם חמציאות המתרחשת במהלך שיעורי חרכיבה הטיפולית?	1	2	3	4	(5)
.22	האם את/ה מרגיש/ה שזה חשוב ללמוד את עקרונות ושיטות הרכיבה טיפולית הכוללות סוסים לסיוע תרפיה?	1	2	3	4	(5)

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.23	עד כמה חשוב ללמוד כיצד להתמודד עם לקוחות, משפחות, ביטוחים רפואיים, ו'מעסיקים אחרים "בעלי עניין" (רופא משפחה, פסיכולוג)?	1	2	3	4	5
שם הקורס : מיומנויות טיפוליות						
1 = לא חשוב בכלל, 2 = די חשוב, 3= חשוב, 4 = יש לכלול בתוכנית הלימודים, 5 = חשוב מאד						
.24	האם את/ה חושב/ת שזה חשוב לשמור על מידה של חשיבה ביקורתית על הקורס?	1	2	3	4	5
.25	האם את/ה אוהב/ת את הרעיון של למידה בקבוצות כדי לפתור בעיות ולהרהר על חוויות אישיות?	1	2	3	4	5
.26	האם את/ה חושב/ת שאתה צריך ללמוד מיומנויות ההוראה?	1	2	3	4	5
התנסות מעשית						
1 = לא חשוב בכלל, 2 = די חשוב, 3= חשוב, 4 = יש לכלול בתוכנית הלימודים, 5 = חשוב מאד						
.27	האם את/ה חושב/ת כי הניסיון המעשי הוא הגורם החשוב ביותר שאליו מתייחסים במקום עבודה חדש?	1	2	3	4	5
.28	האם את/ה חושב שלחלק זה חשוב לתת את רוב שעות הקורס?	1	2	3	4	5
.29	האם את/ה מרגיש/ה כי למידת מיומנויות למידה מעשיות יגרום לך להיות מדריך לרכיבה טיפולית טוב יותר?	1	2	3	4	5
הכנה קודמת לקורס						
1 = לא חשוב בכלל, 2 = די חשוב, 3= חשוב, 4 = יש לכלול בתוכנית הלימודים, 5 = חשוב מאד						
.30	האם את/ה מרגיש/ה שיש לך כישורי רכיבה וידע בטיפול בסוס המספיקים למדריך רכיבה טיפולית?	1	2	3	4	5
.31	האם הכנת את עצמך מראש (צבירת ידע בטיפול בסוס, כישורי ניהול ועוד...) לקראת הקורס?	1	2	3	4	5
.32	האם את/ה מרגיש/ה שאת/ה חייב להיות בעל ידע בסיסי ברכיבה ובטיפול בסוס על-מנת להיות מדריך רכיבה טיפולית?	1	2	3	4	5
פרקטיקום						
1 = לא חשוב בכלל, 2 = די חשוב, 3= חשוב, 4 = יש לכלול בתוכנית הלימודים, 5 = חשוב מאד						
.33	עד כמה חשוב לך לקבל תחושה ריאליסטית של מדריך רכיבה טיפולית?	1	2	3	4	5
.34	האם את/ה חושב/ת שזה חשוב שהפרקטיקום שלך יהיה בפיקוח בכל זמן נתון?	1	2	3	4	5
.35	עד כמה חשוב לחוות מגוון רחב של תפקידים ותחומי אחריות במרכז הרכיבה הטיפולית?	1	2	3	4	5

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Israel National Therapeutic Riding Association

שאלות הקשורות לשעות הלימוד לפי דעתך, כמה שעות צריכות להיות מוקדשות לכל נושא?	מספר שעות
Anatomy	٣
Normal Development	١
Developmental Psychology	٢
Cognitive Psychology	٢
Principles of Practice	٢
Sensory Motor Problems	٢
Psycho Pathologies	١
Physio Pathologies	٢
Supervised Practice	١٥
Experiential Learning	١٥

- האם את/ה מצפה ללמוד את הנושאים הללו בקורס? לא ☒ כן ☒
  הסבר/י: _____

- האם את/ה מרגיש/ה שישנם נושאים שחסרים בתוכנית הלימודים וצריכים להיות כלולים? לא ☒ כן ☐
  הסבר/י: [redacted]

תודה לך על שיתוף הפעולה ומילוי שאלון זה.

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Appendix 2.iii: Findings from Student Questionnaires (SQ)

Students were asked, how important is learning the following skills? On a scale of 0-5, the students believed that these topics must be included and in the case of the practical skills very important.

Topic The English language SAMPLE						
1 – Not at all, 2-Fairly important, 3 – Important, 4 – Very important, 5 - Must be included/ Extremely important						
1	How important is it to study the English Language?	1	2	3	4	5

Topic	Question	Beginning	End	Change
Management skills that teach you how to make important decisions related to therapeutic riding procedure	How important do you feel it is to learn management skills that teach you how to make important decisions related to therapeutic riding procedure?	4.61	4.20	0.40
Engaging with clients, families, medical insurances, and others 'employers' and 'stakeholders' (family doctor, psychologist)	How important is it to learn how to engage with clients, families, medical insurances, and others 'employers' and 'stakeholders' (family doctor, psychologist)?	4.46	4.48	-0.02
Teaching skills	Do you think you should be taught teaching skills?	4.21	3.77	0.45
Practical skills	Do you feel that learning practical skills will make you a more balanced therapeutic riding instructor?	4.64	4.58	0.07

Students were asked **how important was it to prepare for the course?** On a scale of 0-5, the students believed that these topics were important.

Topic	Question	Beginning	End	Change
Living and functional anatomy	Do you think it is important to prepare yourself in advance for this subject, for instance by reading material in books or on the internet?	3.11	2.78	0.33
Normal child development	Do you think it is important to prepare yourself in advance for this subject, for instance by reading material in books or on the internet?	3.07	2.78	0.30
Horse care and management skills	Have you pre-prepared yourself for the course by gaining knowledge of horse care and management skills?	3.82	3.48	0.34

Students were asked **how important are equestrian skills for the course?** On a scale of 0-5, the students believed that these topics were important, must be included and in the case of equestrian skills, extremely important.

Question	Beginning	End
Do you feel you have sufficient equestrian skills, including horseback riding?	3.61	3.93
Have you pre-prepared yourself for the course by gaining knowledge of horse care and management skills?	3.82	3.48
Do you feel that you must have a basic knowledge in equestrian and horseback riding to be a professional therapeutic riding practitioner?	4.61	4.93

Students were asked **how important is theoretical knowledge in the following subjects?** On a scale of 0-5, the students believed at the beginning of the course all topics were important, and in most cases must be included and some were even considered extremely important. In most topics there was a minimal drop at the end of the course, as the scores stayed within the ranged 3.8-4.81, which meant that students still believed the topics were important and should be included.

Topic	Question	Beginning	End	Change
Living and functional anatomy	Do you think this topic is valuable for your future?	3.93	3.96	0.03
Normal child development	Do you think that this subject is important for your therapeutic riding studies?	4.64	4.22	-0.42
Link between sensory motor development, physical and psychological dysfunction and system and problems with primitive reflexes	Do you feel it is necessary for you to understand the link between sensory motor developments, physical and psychological dysfunction and system and problems with primitive reflexes?	4.41	4.33	-0.08
Role of primitive reflexes in normal human development?	How important is it for you to understand the role of primitive reflexes in normal human development?	4.13	4.19	0.06
Psychological changes that occur in the course of a child's life	How important is it for you to study and understand the psychological changes that occur in the course of a child's life?	4.68	3.93	-0.75
Different ways humans acquire knowledge	Do you think learning about the different ways humans acquire knowledge is an important part of a therapeutic riding course?	4.11	3.59	-0.51

Topic	Question	Beginning	End	Change
How people acquire, process and store information	Do you feel it is important to study how people acquire, process and store information?	3.91	3.48	-0.43
How people think, perceive, remember, and learn	Do you feel it is important to understand how people think, perceive, remember, and learn?	4.14	3.85	-0.29
Physical and psychological pathologies	Do you feel that it is important to study various disabilities otherwise known as physical and psychological pathologies?	4.75	4.81	0.06
Course of various diseases	Do you feel that knowing the course of various diseases will have any significant impact upon your practical experience?	4.57	4.52	-0.05
Theoretical understanding of therapeutic riding	Do you think it is necessary to have a theoretical understanding of therapeutic riding?	4.61	4.17	-0.44
Principles and practices of therapeutic riding that include EAT	Do you feel it is important to study the principles and practices of Therapeutic Riding that include Equine Assisted Therapy?	4.71	4.31	-0.40
Living and functional anatomy	Do you think this topic is valuable for your future?	3.93	3.96	-0.03

Appendix 2.iv: Student Questionnaires (SQ) Goal Expectation

Students were asked to write six goals they intended to achieve during the course. Below are listed the student goal expectations aggregated into goal types.

When students talk about a therapeutic riding lesson, they are referring to what currently is referenced as EAA/T practitioner session.

#	Goals / Expectation Regarding:	Type	Goal / Expectation
1	A - Course - General	1 - Professional development	To be able to teach a therapeutic riding lesson
2	A - Course - General	1 - Professional development	To work in this field and become a professional
3	A - Course - General	1 - Professional development	To find a profession that is important and significant to me
4	A - Course - General	1 - Professional development	To become an outstanding instructor
5	A - Course - General	1 - Professional development	To professionalise in the area
6	A - Course - General	1 - Professional development	To become a better riding instructor
7	A - Course - General	1 - Professional development	To gain experience
8	A - Course - General	1 - Professional development	To become a good therapist
9	A - Course - General	1 - Professional development	To acquire practical teaching experience
10	A - Course - General	1 - Professional development	To be able to use my 20 years of experience as western riding instructor also in this field
11	A - Course - General	1 - Professional development	To be able to keep track after lessons done by other instructors in my farm
12	A - Course - General	1 - Professional development	To gain knowledge and confidence that will allow me to be creative as a therapeutic riding instructor
13	A - Course - General	1 - Professional development	To gain more knowledge in therapeutic riding in order to become a better therapist

#	Goals / Expectation Regarding:	Type	Goal / Expectation
14	A - Course - General	1 - Professional development	To finish the course and have the possibility to work in the field
15	A - Course - General	1 - Professional development	To gain experience with horses and teaching in order to become a riding instructor (regular)
16	A - Course - General	1 - Professional development	To receive the required knowledge for becoming a better instructor at the end of the course
17	A - Course - General	2 - Personal development	To learn for myself, soul searching
18	A - Course - General	2 - Personal development	To improve capabilities on a personal level
19	A - Course - General	2 - Personal development	To strengthen myself through studying and get to know myself better through the horse and the child
20	A - Course - General	2 - Personal development	To grow as a person
21	A - Course - General	2 - Personal development	To learn to set boundaries and soul search
22	A - Course - General	2 - Personal development	To educate myself
23	A - Course - General	2 - Personal development	To get to know myself better through helping others
24	A - Course - General	2 - Personal development	To develop capabilities to understand people and help them
25	A - Course - General	2 - Personal development	Personal development
26	A - Course - General	2 - Personal development	To learn about myself and how to care for myself
27	B - Learning	1 - Knowledge - general	To learn and acquire knowledge
28	B - Learning	1 - Knowledge - general	To get to know different people better
29	B - Learning	1 - Knowledge - general	To learn more and absorb as much as possible
30	B - Learning	1 - Knowledge - general	To learn about others that may become patients one day
31	B - Learning	1 - Knowledge - general	To understand processes

#	Goals / Expectation Regarding:	Type	Goal / Expectation
32	B - Learning	1 - Knowledge - general	To gain knowledge that can be applied in practice
33	B - Learning	1 - Knowledge - general	To be exposed to relevant information as much as possible
34	B - Learning	1 - Knowledge - general	To get to know a variety of populations
35	B - Learning	1 - Knowledge - general	To learn
36	B - Learning	1 - Knowledge - general	To enrich my knowledge
37	B - Learning	2 - Therapy - theory	To enrich myself with knowledge of the therapy field
38	B - Learning	2 - Therapy - theory	To understand the nature of the term "therapy"
39	B - Learning	2 - Therapy - theory	To receive the information needed for understanding the therapeutic world
40	B - Learning	2 - Therapy - theory	To deepen my knowledge and understanding of the different disabilities
41	B - Learning	2 - Therapy - theory	To learn and acquire knowledge regarding problems in the human body
42	B - Learning	2 - Therapy - theory	To acquire knowledge of different disorders and disabilities
43	B - Learning	2 - Therapy - theory	To understand child development and psychology
44	B - Learning	2 - Therapy - theory	To be exposed to disorders I'm not aware of and to learn whether they are genetic or acquired
45	B - Learning	2 - Therapy - theory	To understand the causes and treatment of hyperactive
46	B - Learning	2 - Therapy - theory	To meet different types of patients in order to get to know different therapeutic techniques
47	B - Learning	2 - Therapy - theory	To enhance my knowledge of psychological and physical aspects relating to disabled people and find my way to help them
48	B - Learning	2 - Therapy - theory	To be introduced to a variety of patients/disorders
49	B - Learning	3 - Therapy - skills	To acquire tools for teaching people with special needs

#	Goals / Expectation Regarding:	Type	Goal / Expectation
50	B - Learning	3 - Therapy - skills	To learn how to communicate with physically or mentally disabled people
51	B - Learning	3 - Therapy - skills	To improve my teaching and care for children through the horse
52	B - Learning	3 - Therapy - skills	To learn how to approach riders with special needs correctly
53	B - Learning	3 - Therapy - skills	To learn how to communicate with children with mental deficiency
54	B - Learning	3 - Therapy - skills	To receive tools for dealing with disabled people that will enable me to help them
55	B - Learning	3 - Therapy - skills	To acquire tools that will help improving the lives of those who need help
56	B - Learning	3 - Therapy - skills	To acquire therapeutic capabilities for caring for people with special needs
57	B - Learning	3 - Therapy - skills	To learn how to avoid damaging the patient
58	B - Learning	3 - Therapy - skills	To develop my therapeutic skills
59	B - Learning	3 - Therapy - skills	To learn how to deal with different situations with the rider
60	B - Learning	3 - Therapy - skills	To learn to identify the patient's needs
61	B - Learning	3 - Therapy - skills	To get to know functional, emotional and physical problems and learn how to deal with them
62	B - Learning	3 - Therapy - skills	To receive tools for therapeutic teaching
63	B - Learning	3 - Therapy - skills	To learn to recognise problems with patients and to make the right decisions for each patient
64	B - Learning	3 - Therapy - skills	To learn how to identify disorders, at least at a basic level
65	B - Learning	3 - Therapy - skills	To learn therapeutic techniques that are aimed for people with special needs
66	B - Learning	3 - Therapy - skills	To learn therapeutic techniques that are aimed for disabled people
67	B - Learning	4 - Horses	To gain better knowledge of the horse world (particularly therapeutic)

#	Goals / Expectation Regarding:	Type	Goal / Expectation
68	B - Learning	4 - Horses	To get to know another horse riding discipline
69	B - Learning	4 - Horses	To acquire tools and knowledge of riding, stables and horses
70	B - Learning	4 - Horses	To learn and understand the psychology of the horse
71	B - Learning	4 - Horses	To learn to ride in a professional manner
72	B - Learning	4 - Horses	To gain more knowledge about horses
73	B - Learning	4 - Horses	To learn to ride at a professional level and gain knowledge about horses
74	B - Learning	4 - Horses	To improve my riding
75	B - Learning	4 - Horses	To improve my knowledge of riding and working with horses
76	B - Learning	4 - Horses	To understand the horse's character
77	B - Learning	5 - Human/horse relationship	To understand the ability to help through horses
78	B - Learning	5 - Human/horse relationship	To learn as much as possible about helping people using horses and to deepen the connection with the horses
79	B - Learning	5 - Human/horse relationship	To learn how therapeutic riding helps patients
80	B - Learning	5 - Human/horse relationship	To learn about problems and difficulties that can be treated with the help of horses
81	B - Learning	5 - Human/horse relationship	To deeply understand the objectives of therapeutic riding in order to care for people
82	B - Learning	5 - Human/horse relationship	To understand the choice of horses in therapy
83	B - Learning	5 - Human/horse relationship	To learn about methods for training the horse for therapeutic purposes
84	B - Learning	5 - Human/horse relationship	To understand the connection between the horse and the rider
85	B - Learning	5 - Human/horse relationship	To understand the horse's contribution to the therapy
86	B - Learning	5 - Human/horse relationship	To understand the processes formed in therapy with horses

#	Goals / Expectation Regarding:	Type	Goal / Expectation
87	B - Learning	5 - Human/horse relationship	To learn more about the connection between the horse and the patient
88	B - Learning	5 - Human/horse relationship	To understand the training of the horse for therapeutic purposes
89	C - Course experience	Course experience	To finish the course successfully, and that the material will be taught in a relevant and interesting way
90	C - Course experience	Course experience	Creative and interesting teaching
91	C - Course experience	Course experience	To be able to sit in class more than a few hours, and to enjoy the course
92	C - Course experience	Course experience	To receive more practical demonstrations
93	C - Course experience	Course experience	To receive help from the course's staff, both in theoretical and practical studies
94	C - Course experience	Course experience	To enjoy the learning experience, people, riding etc.
95	C - Course experience	Course experience	To gain great satisfaction from this course, personally and professionally
96	C - Course experience	Course experience	To learn about patients and horses from the experience of the stable staff
97	C - Course experience	Course experience	To enjoy the course
98	C - Course experience	Course experience	To have an interesting and enriching experience
99	D - Profession	Expectations from profession	Fulfillment
100	D - Profession	Expectations from profession	To help children and fulfill myself
101	D - Profession	Expectations from profession	To help people/children with their pathology
102	D - Profession	Expectations from profession	To make a living
103	D - Profession	Expectations from profession	To be close to horses, amazing animal
104	D - Profession	Expectations from profession	To gain satisfaction from caring and helping people by applying what I have learned
105	D - Profession	Expectations from profession	To help children

#	Goals / Expectation Regarding:	Type	Goal / Expectation
106	D - Profession	Expectations from profession	To find balance in life
107	D - Profession	Expectations from profession	To be able to work with children
108	D - Profession	Expectations from profession	To work with youth at risk, understand their difficulties and help them
109	D - Profession	Expectations from profession	To help people form a connection with the horse
110	D - Profession	Expectations from profession	To contribute to others
111	D - Profession	Expectations from profession	To have the feeling I'm doing something meaningful for me and others
112	D - Profession	Expectations from profession	To enjoy every single moment and patient and to experience the excitement in succeeding
113	D - Profession	Expectations from profession	To help people form a connection with others
114	D - Profession	Expectations from profession	To work in a field that, I love and that interests me
115	D - Profession	Expectations from profession	To enjoy what I'm doing
116	D - Profession	Expectations from profession	To obtain an interesting profession
117	D - Profession	Expectations from profession	To create for myself new options to make a better living
118	D - Profession	Expectations from profession	To receive all the tools that are needed in order to become a suitable instructor

Appendix 3

Appendix 3.i: Letter from Course Administrator

Dear Anita,

In response to your question about the end of course questionnaires, I confirm that the scores on theoretical courses of Child Developmental Psychology and Cognitive Psychology were particularly low.

Considering the questions themselves, it is clear that these two subjects were significantly dis-appreciated by students.

The remarks made on the forms and discussions on the subject clearly show that the dissatisfaction was not from the quality of the teaching or the importance of the materials themselves but more related to difficulties following theoretical courses, integrating and even understanding high level theoretical subjects.

Students with low studies profile most frequently expressed, difficulties. (Their difficult were, difficulties to follow regular school programme and no academic degree).

Observation of the groups also seems to show more influence of the **non-academic** students on the **academic** ones. This influence was recognizable through social affinities, behavior patterns and choices for practical groups work.

Best Regards,

[redacted] Course Administrator

Appendix 3.ii: Invitation for Focus Group

DATE

Dear ---------

My name is Anita Shkedi. I immigrated to Israel from London, England in 1985 and founded the first equine assisted activities (EAA/T) programme in Israel. In 1988 I developed the first EAA/T practitioner diploma course in Israel. I am the founding director and one of the EAA/T educators/ instructors in my centre, the Israel National Therapeutic Riding Association (INTRA), as well as at two academic institutions, Ariel University College in Ramat Aviv, Israel.

Currently I am a doctoral student at the University of Derby, UK where the emphasis of my doctorate investigation is to reform, restructure and revise EAA/T curriculum for prospective practitioners in order to better meet client needs. My purpose in writing is to invite you to participate in a Focus Group that is part of my doctoral global investigation of therapeutic riding instructors' curricula.

The rationale of my enquiry is to determine the extent to which current educational practices prepare future EAA/T Practitioners for providing the most comprehensive, effective and progressive treatment for the physically and mentally challenged. My intent is to improve learning outcomes for the disabled by influencing the professionalism of EAA/T practitioners, aiming at a level of professionalism similar to that practiced in education and healthcare, by identifying systemic successes and weaknesses and any gaps in EAA/T practitioner curricula that need addressing. I believe that many of these gaps stem from the lack of experiential integration and knowledge transfer between EAA/T, educational and medical professions and feel the need to explore these areas.

The major objective of the Focus Group is to develop a set of criteria, ideas and insights regarding the perceived ideal curriculum for the development of EAA/T before proceeding into a more in-depth investigation. My inquiry will define the problems or issues about which more information will be sought. It will be conducted amongst expert members of the EAA/T practitioner population and notable stakeholders in the development of the field, to discuss fundamental curriculum principles, strategies of teaching and evaluation, the facilitation of learning, cultural considerations and more.

By agreeing to be a participant in a Focus group for my doctoral thesis you will be ultimately contributing to a research design that investigates EAA/T practitioner practices to ensure that practitioners are sufficiently trained to meet client needs with the intention of raising the level of professionalism, standards and operational application. Looking for gaps in current curricula, the research will examine critical educational theories as well as proven practical paradigms from healthcare and education. It seeks ways to engage employers and other stakeholders, helping them to become more sensitive to cross-cultural differences.

Your participation could help yield the kind of information that might lead to a:

- Shift in public opinion
- Better cooperation between education, medical and equine assisted therapy fields
- An emerging professionally validated EAA/T practitioner degree
- Advancement of knowledge, public report and government approval

I hope that I can count on your participation. Please RSVP to me at Israel National Therapeutic Riding Association, Neurim Village Israel. If you have any questions, please contact me at anitashkedi@gmail.com or at (+972) (0) 54 7205886.

Sincerely,

Anita Shkedi

Founding Director, INTRA

Doctoral Candidate, University of Derby

Appendix 3.iii: Invitation for Interview

DATE

Dear ---------

My name is Anita Shkedi. I immigrated to Israel from London, England in 1985 and founded the first equine assisted activities (EAA/T) programme in Israel (convention naming therapeutic riding). In 1988 I developed the first EAA/T practitioner diploma course in Israel. I am the founding director and one of the EAA/T educators/ practitioners in my centre, the Israel National Therapeutic Riding Association (INTRA), as well as at two academic institutions, Ariel University College in Ramat Aviv, Israel.

Currently I am a doctoral student at the University of Derby, UK where the emphasis of my doctorate investigation is to reform, restructure and revise equine assisted activities and therapy (EAA/T) curriculum for prospective practitioners in order to better meet client needs. My purpose in writing is to allow me to interview you as part of my doctoral global investigation of therapeutic riding instructors' curricula.

The rationale of my enquiry is to determine the extent to which current educational practices prepare future EAA/T Practitioners for providing the most comprehensive, effective and progressive treatment for the physically and mentally challenged. My intent is to improve learning outcomes for the disabled by influencing the professionalism of EAA/T practitioners, aiming at a level of professionalism similar to that practiced in education and healthcare, by identifying systemic successes and weaknesses and any gaps in EAA/T practitioner curricula that need addressing. I believe that many of these gaps stem from the lack of experiential integration and knowledge transfer between EAA/T, educational and medical professions and feel the need to explore these areas.

The major objective of the interview is to develop a set of criteria, ideas and insights regarding the perceived ideal curriculum for the development of EAA/T before proceeding into a more in-depth investigation. My inquiry will define the problems or issues about which more information will be sought. It will be conducted amongst expert members of the EAA/T practitioner population and notable stakeholders in the development of the field, to discuss fundamental curriculum principles, strategies of teaching and evaluation, the facilitation of learning, cultural considerations and more.

By agreeing to be interviewed for my doctoral thesis you are ultimately contributing to a research design that investigates EAA/T practitioner practices to ensure that practitioners are sufficiently trained to meet client needs, with the intention of raising the level of professionalism, standards and operational application. Looking for gaps in current curricula the research will examine critical educational theories as well as proven practical paradigms from healthcare and education. It seeks ways to engage employers and other stakeholders, helping them to become more sensitive to cross-cultural differences.

Your participation could help yield the kind of information that might lead to a:

- Shift in public opinion
- Better cooperation between education, medical and equine assisted therapy fields
- An emerging professionally validated EAA/T practitioner degree
- Advancement of knowledge, public report and government approval

I hope that I can count on your participation. Please RSVP to me at Israel National Therapeutic Riding Association, Neurim Village Israel. If you have any questions, please contact me at agshkedi@bezeqint.net or at (+972) (0) 54 7205886.

Sincerely,

Anita Shkedi

Founding Director, INTRA

Doctoral Candidate, University of Derby

Appendix 3.iv: Invitation to Colleagues

DATE

Dear ---------

My name is Anita Shkedi. I immigrated to Israel from London, England in 1985 and founded the first therapeutic riding programme in Israel. In 1988 I developed the first therapeutic riding instructor diploma course in Israel. I am the founding director and one of the therapeutic riding educators/ instructors in my centre, the Israel National Therapeutic Riding Association (INTRA).

Currently I am a doctoral student at Derby University, UK where the emphasis of my doctorate investigation is to reform, restructure and revise therapeutic riding curriculum for practitioners to better meet client needs. Globally therapeutic riding is known as Equine Assisted Activities and Therapy EAA/T. For my thesis, I will refer to it as EAA/T.

The rationale of my enquiry is to determine the extent to which current educational practices prepare future EAA/T practitioners for providing the most comprehensive, effective and progressive treatment for the physically and mentally challenged. My intent is to improve learning outcomes for the disabled by influencing the professionalism of EAA/T practitioners, aiming at a level of professionalism similar to that practiced in education and healthcare, by identifying systemic successes and weaknesses and any gaps in the EAA/T practitioner curricula that need addressing. I believe that many of these gaps stem from the lack of experiential integration and knowledge transfer between the EAA/T, educational and medical professions and feel the need to explore these areas.

The major objective of the research is to develop a set of criteria, ideas and insights regarding the perceived ideal curriculum for the development of EAA/T practitioners before proceeding into a more in-depth investigation. My inquiry will define the problems or issues about which more information will be sought. It will be conducted amongst expert members of the EAA/T population and notable stakeholders in the development of the field, to discuss fundamental curriculum principles, strategies of teaching and evaluation, the facilitation of learning, cultural considerations and more.

By agreeing to let me carry out my Doctoral thesis you will ultimately contribute to the professionalisation of the field. You will be part of the research design that investigates EAA/T practices ensuring that practitioners are sufficiently trained to meet client needs with the intention of raising the level of professionalism, standards and operational application. Looking for gaps in current curricula, it examines critical educational theories as well as proven practical paradigms from healthcare and education. It seeks ways to engage "employers" and other stakeholders, helping them to become more sensitive to cross-cultural differences.

I appreciate your consent and support that you are giving me. I believe your support will help yield the kind of information that will lead to:

- A shift in public opinion
- Better cooperation between education, medical and equine assisted therapy fields
- An emerging professionally validated EAA/T practitioner degree
- Advancement of knowledge, public report and government approval.

Sincerely,

Anita Shkedi

Founding Director, INTRA- Israel National Therapeutic Riding Association

Doctoral Candidate, University of Derby

Appendix 4

Appendix 4.i: Focus Group Consent

FOCUS GROUP CONSENT FORM

I, _____, authorise Anita Shkedi to utilise my responses to the focus group questions in her research for her doctorate.

In addition, I agree to participate in the videotaping and recording of the focus group.

Name_____ Date_____

Appendix 4.ii: Interview Consent

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

I, _____, authorise Anita Shkedi to utilise my responses to the interview questions in her research for her doctorate.

In addition, I agree to participate in the recording of the Interview.

Name_____ Date_____

Appendix 4.iii: Colleague Consent

COLLEAGUES CONSENT FORM

As a colleague I agree to allow Anita Shkedi to carry out her Doctoral Research

_____

Name_____ Date_____

Appendix 5

Appendix 5.i: Focus Group Transcript (FG3)

Moderator X

My job is to try to keep you as close as possible to the questions.

I do not need to identify participants.

Participant

Can you clarify who is the EAA/T practitioner? Could you explain what EAA/T practitioner stands for? I was looking for a name that would cover all the various global names for an EAA/T practitioner. In many different countries, the name was different – for instance in the UK instructors are called Riding for the Disabled Instructor. In some countries EAA/T practitioners are called hippo therapists. So, I decided that EAA/T practitioners covered everyone.

Each paragraph contains the words of a speaker. There is a list of the speakers.

Question 1: In your opinion, the EAA/T curricula sufficient train practitioners to meet client needs.

Participants: I think the curriculum is in some cases, depending whether it is a training course or an on-site workshop. The workshops are designed to review information so that people acquire additional knowledge and education. The curriculum gets into much more depth. This is not just about curriculum but how and where can EAA/T practitioners go for additional information to improve the depth of the course.

I would say **No** at the entry level (registered instructor) the education is not sufficient for practitioners. It is not an affective training for practitioners. Being very experientially-based, and using a "universal" curriculum, it is difficult to validate our field – and especially as we still do not even know what to call ourselves.

I agree with X, I think the entry level is too low as it lacks knowledge in equine behaviour and the understanding of concepts related to human behaviour and relationships.

There is a huge difference between what X and I am involved in –college curricula as against Y (therapeutic riding centre) or any approved training courses that are not integrated into a college programme. I am trying to find ways to integrate what the college offers into the therapeutic riding programme. Use what the college can offer and add it to the regular EAA/T practitioner training. We have (in our college) an equine studies programme. There is an enormous difference between the people who go through that programme and who are 18-21years olds, as to those who come from the outside to the college who do not have that piece of experience. It is a problem to get these two groups connected, so that they can gain the same (EAA/T) experience.

Something, is that X is a leader in EAA/T, and if that is our perception, there are so many different people who see themselves as the leaders in their aspect of therapeutic riding, as individuals or as a group, and the criteria's and the standards nationally are really not defined so even at the University level, and I am not sure what are the connections between the Universities and outside programmes. So, the answer to the question is that the bar is not so high and there needs to be uniformity for EAA/T practitioner. I am talking about EAA/T practitioner and not Therapists.

From my experience Xx teaching are geared towards an Xx programme only and there are many other programmes that get totally left out.

Certified in the 1990's through self-study and spending time reviewing that Xx has put together to get myself back on board. I see a huge change in 10 years in the level of professionalism within the Xx organisations– talking about other programmes that are teaching instructors, there are some top programmes in the USA and (currently) there is no synchronisation with all programmes.

Question 2: What ways do the curriculum sufficiently train practitioners?

I see huge improvement of standardising sessions for lessons, operationalising session's means that they have to measure outcomes. The negative is that this approach is limited, as it does not leave a lot of room for open thinking. Operationalising a curriculum does

not leave a lot of room for open thinking. This is where I see an issue that needs to be addressed.

My perspective. I do not know that there is any entry-level that is good. So, it is good to have your perspective from 10-years absence in from the field. Institutionalising and standardising does not allow the development of critical thinkers and problem-solving skills. We need an area of opportunity that would provide a better base line of knowledge.

…Any other positives?

Not enough knowledge base to support our people – currently a Band-Aid to the larger global vision to see that change needs to happen. In an organisation this is very beneficial, many are old fashioned and so myopic in their little box. It is in the interest of values to take a good to look at the current curricula, and its needs. It is an openness to look at what happening elsewhere, looking at practice.

The mentor system is becoming more widespread. To try to help those outside in the field who are not part of the training courses. These are people who are outside the approved training courses. The problem is that there is no standardisation from where they come from. At least the information they receive will make it possible to help someone (the prospective EAA/T practitioner) assess their skills and critical thinking skills. To help them (the prospective EAA/T practitioner) look at what they are learning and be better at it. We also need to help them (the prospective EAA/T practitioner) to assess personal skills. So the mentor can learn as well use the new teacher, (prospective EAA/T practitioner). (Mentoring) - This is a big step in the right direction, - it is exciting to see someone receive a new set of skills to help another person come along, I think this is a step in the right direction.

Going for a primary videotape method of assessment (which was the method some years ago) with no feedback, to now (the current method of teaching / examining) -a constant feedback technique improves the level of training. The on-site piece (videoing) was for convenience. The videotape served a purpose to get people qualified but did not improve quality. The higher levels of teaching, (using feedback), has helped and accommodate people to a higher level of learning and feedback. Video teaching did not help the teaching methodology. There was an effort to raise the bar. Recognising that we had some deficiencies that goes back to the horsemanship level, and self-learning. Having the

opportunity of on-site experience and self-learning with feedback continues to be enhanced and all people coming into the profession need it to be improved.

People coming into the programme are not at the level needed. We are not requiring the pre-requisites to be met for the entry intake. We want to have EAA/T practitioner from membership stand point from a registration to advanced level.

…And are we giving the clients what they need?

How can we become a more professional industry and give the clients what they need?

It cost money and convenience to reach a higher level. In other professions people give up four years of their lives to learn to be a professional. Trainees want EAA/T practitioner to be a cheap easy fix, (like weekend learning). This does not lend itself to quality.

Professional what are the possibilities? We find that people come from Florida to take a low paying job at our centre, as there are just a few jobs- they cannot find a job. Is this really a profession, it is for some, however for the balk of people working and teaching in this profession, there are no jobs.

We want to know what is good and what should remain and then what shall we add.

Continue in education requirements, any profession, as part of its ongoing needs is to acquire on going educational requirements.

I think that what X said, a three-tired certification – in the States the curriculum requires a knowledge base, retrieval and in terms of exam, practical is based on teaching and demonstration of skills and in theory this should work, I do not think in practice, and I think probably the current registered certification is not good at this point. Based on what Xx requires, as a practitioner in terms of time, possibly at the entry level there should be a disability piece. We have increased practical requirement from 25 hours to 80-100. In our centre requisite is about 100 hours so we are getting a higher level – from our 18 -21 years old students.

Interns at the G do they socialise in equine programmes. So as educators in that sense so you are presenting what a kind of programme? So what is the strength of your programme?

Some come as a Xx practitioner and we would help them do a practical, we really teach them how to be a professional in this field and how to interact with clients, horses, how to be a role model in this profession. So, we see ourselves as role models (as we) can show them how to integrate in this field and how an agency like this works. This is much more integrate and much more than being just an EAA/T practitioner. There is not so much equestrian, (taking place), especially for the students who come for many years into the intern programme.

Some people are looking for easy way to be certified and we are seeing the flip side of this as we have seen so many eager (students wanting) to learn more, to do the right thing, learning the right thing, willing to come to the G and study for several months on site. We have so many different departments on site, however they do not focus on one the skill.

When you have your own centre you do your own thing but there so much more goes on than just EAA/T.

What, we have an increased awareness of where we are at and this goes back to the horsemanship side, because of this interest there is an awareness of what needs to happen to raise that **bar** Changes have to be made in the curriculum; there is awareness of what has to be changed so that the **bar** is raised.

There are techniques that require lectures and (others that) required practicum. That a guided practicum in a systematic approach – 25 hours can be a lengthy practicum, (however), 100 hours get individuals to a point where they can conduct alone a therapeutic riding lesson. A lengthy practicum – provides all the support to get the students to give satisfactory riding lessons.

What are the gaps in the curriculum combining 3-4 questions together?

…And what would you see to be included in the curriculum?

We have been trying in Xx to see how much more training an instructor needs in mental and social aspects in order to meet the clients need and raise the **bar**.

(This is the case) especially for physical disabilities and PTSD. The prospective EAA/T practitioner also needs training as to how to help the social and emotional needs.

You have been looking at the specific needs of the client to see where there are gaps in the curriculum. You are looking at the curriculum to see if the training is sufficient for the client's needs today- you see this as a gap.

You can put someone on a horse – flabbergasted at the lack of knowledge about equine or (any other knowledge). What is a relationship? What does it look like – what is the different between a therapeutic relationship and a personal relational? What is a therapeutic environment? How does one speak and goes about the day in a Therapeutic riding centre? Clinical relationships, the instructor needs help in this area.

Having found my way to EAA/T from Animal therapy, I still think that EAA/T is too isolated and insulated, it's not right just to focus on a too narrow piece. So few riding people are attending conferences. So, few attend conferences. A lot of prospective EAA/T practitioner curriculums do not even scratch the surface of benefits from all the knowledge that is out there.

In a sense our system does not support us well in the USA, in most other countries you first have to be a trained riding instructor – we are just stumbling towards this, we do not have any 'across the board training', like the BHS trainer. It is clear that our practitioner level is much too low.

Our system does not support us well. We do not have an across the board teaching exam. There is no system to say if you want to be involved with horses, this is what you have to do.

Our practitioner level is much too low. How do we fill the gap?

Each national organisation has its own standards can your national organisations fit in or are they too low. Where do you fit in on that scale if they have a national level do we fit in a respected by the national federations, or are they too low or too high?

Question 3: If you were designing the idea curriculum what would it be like?

We need to stop little individual training schemes; we need a centralised scheme. Centralised university setting coming up with certificate programmes, which would deal with the entire course learning - behavioural issues and teach some actual riding skills.

Based on a four-year programme the EAA/T graduates like our equine studies students can do anything.

Practitioners at 21 have a choice of jobs as they are better trained and they are coming out at 21 with more experience and are better practitioners. Equine studies curriculum does turn out very well trained practitioners. Not the equine science programme- the equine studies curriculum that generally turns out very well trained practitioners.

Question 4: How to support this, certificate programmes in colleges?

Currently H and only H, have a fully-fledged 4-year degree programmes.

(The programme at) H contains 8 core topics that a student is required to take. They include introductory course, (knowledge of all) disabilities, the training of the horse, admin classes business dep't, psychology education classes + human anatomy and development riding lessons and the equine study dept. practicum of 2 ½ years long. They can also take a double major, or a minor in therapeutic or equine business.

As there is the pay out and no jobs that can pay back what you have paid out for the course? There are not many people who want to spend money for these programmes. Few programmes cater for this level of students, which is problematic for EAA/T.

That is why there are so many registered instructors (registered being the lowest level of instructor qualification). No one wants to spend money unless there is a monetary gain.

The state special education department suggested that to continue at G I would need a master's degree in education. I told the principal that would not help me in my profession. What would help me in the next step? I am a master level instructor, I could be better than I am, however, I do not think going back to school and becoming a master of education can help me. I do not need a Ma in special education I need to go up in the EAA/T field.

What is it you are actually doing (EAA/T practitioner) with the people you are working with – goal to teach them how to ride or some other goals with what you are trying to do with them? Because that is something that people argue over publically. Business model different for recreational or medical-based outcome will be different for recreational or medical.

Because what has happened in the industry when you are not a therapist.

As EAA/T practitioner you are not a therapist unless you are a trained therapist, lines get muddled, people over step their boundaries. How do you define this role, we are now trying to be very black and white --- now black and white we have to ask ourselves about what we are doing, after being all over the place, (having started all over the place)?

We need some research – what we know works to improve a stakeholder perspective we need to know what works.

We are creating our own demise.

Were these kids learning a lot of social skills from therapeutic activities and not from being in therapy? This is hard to redefine. GC is a place where there is a synthesis between the different areas. EAA/T practitioners who are working with challenged – work at this to fill the gap.

My perception is that we can either teach people riding skills… Very little work has gone into synthesising activities, when you are working with horses and human.

Question 5: How can EAA/T create synthesised activities? Learning how to bring in other professions to synthesise activities and compliment areas of expertise.

Question 6: How can the curriculum respond?

Team teaching bringing in other professionals to compliment expertise

Understanding the horse, someone who understands the horse and the relationship with the horse. There is a benefit to the 3-day workshop deals where you get some experience by participating in a workshop experience.

That is the horse piece you have brought up issues of medical social educational

Question 7: What do you see in terms of the curriculum to create the synthesis in other areas?

What always surprises me?

One area, I am surprised how the Xx model – ha! Different people all the participants seen as a diverse group of people who have all these different challenges. I think that people (EAA/T practitioners) must learn how to differentiate teaching (techniques), they must learn what is the difference between teaching a child or an adult / what does disability mean to a challenged person. They must know what are their physical/ social /emotional challenges. Some centres that have mental health populations are really new to working with a mixed bag of challenges.

Populations are changing, people who rode twenty years ago, and are not riding so much. (Said he did not see as much Cerebral Palsy (CP) in therapeutic riding centres).

Within the industry - where there is autism, there are cross over with disabilities – (Here EAA/T practitioners) focus on the characteristics, and not the disabilities. So almost everyone is going to cross over, not just about the physical component and social but also the psychological---. Every one dealing with that child - There is always a cross over… The EAA/T practitioner needs to draw from the expertise working in all those areas. (In addition prospective EAA/T practitioners need) basic communication skills basic understanding with types (disabilities) basic understanding of basic individual types and have the opportunity to work working with different people. How do you bring all the differences together to complement each other?

(Cross over means learning from different experts, so that the EAA/T practitioner can understand the signs and symptoms of a child with Autism… Many illnesses, genetic disorders etc. are a collection of symptoms, ANITA explains).

Question 8: What would be the ideal curriculum?

Reply: A 4-year degree programme.

Equine skills bottom line – a high level of equestrian where everyone has to be a horseman coming in with riding skills- No/yes

You cannot train people in four years to be an expert in equestrian.

Moderator wanted clarification- do you need to learn how to ride a horse?

Question 9: What is the equestrian entry-level coming in? Ride a horse? Or not ride? (The level was undecided)

You do not need to know how to ride a horse.

In my personal perspective yes you do need to know how to ride a horse, and know some horse behaviour.

You need to know:

- Anatomy and physiology
- Disability knowledge
- Educational social emotional psychological knowledge
- Teaching skills
- Critical thinking –everyone was laughing here
- Confidentiality

I am also hearing that somehow becoming aware of the (challenged) population the (prospective EAA/T Practitioner) needs to study not just the challenged rider but also the family and more. In our college, we have the luxury and are able to encourage the prospective EAA/T practitioner to interview parents so that they can have a better understanding of the (challenged) persons needs (so that they can adopt) the right skills to help that person.

We need **time** to get people trained so that the (Prospective EAA/T practitioner) can figure out what to do. Who and what is the person they are trying to support as well as what is the lesson plan.

Time is the thing, but we need time to get people changed we cannot rush it and unfortunately people feel that way.

People need to become certified proficient at what they do – the objective is not then being qualified but being proficient at what you do.

Student EAA/T practitioners needs to learn therapeutic skills and how to intervene to help our clients, how to deal with client issues.

Question 10: How would problem-based learning (PBL), and Active Learning (AL) etc., benefit the client?

The wider the lenses the more you can give.

Teaching human animal cross species for the human animal bond.

Farm-based education uses the farm environment to improve the challenges of the client. We should do some cross-fertilising with their (Farm) techniques, which can benefit the programme. The wider the course the better you can give (the challenged).

One curious question about the university programme perhaps is that the curriculum is very good. Ours is based in the equine studies programme so we only have to take (add) some human related things, introduction to psychology but only an introduction.

Our EAA/T programme is firmly based in an equine programme. Our practicum is in the horse programme. The students do take an introduction to psychology but only an introduction. The practicum is an in-house programme that includes a one-year course to teach specifics of the therapy riding, fundamental theories of training –volunteering.

In that one-year course they learn fundamental theories everything to help the student get a basic understanding and then they can choose different specialities/ equine business / science and equine studies to finish the four years.

At the end of the course the students come together to synthesise (the learning) the course. At the end of the course there is an end seminar to explore what they have done. They also learn lots of science-based stuff so they do learn how to do research and how to present a really good science paper. They learn how to teach riding instruction. They learn how to teach riding instruction to challenged learners. These equine studies students come better prepared for EAA/T than the traditional EAA/T practitioner students.

The curriculum piece is the piece that puts it all together, I held a big meeting to enhance their education and this is what they came up with.

Everyone here (agrees that) the practicum piece is the curriculum experience. 25 hours is not enough (to produce) successful candidates who bring in other areas of expertise, practical skills and riding skills.

At an equine specialist workshop, we work as synthesisers for exactly what you are talking about.

Question 11: How do you work with the equine studies programme? How do you work with the case studies?

They (the prospective EAA/T practitioner) have to choose a child and parent to study – to understand (what are the influences of) the parent on the child's life. We (EAA/T practitioners) being to get an understanding what is happing (in the clients' life). (Then) how does EAA/T enter into their (the client's) worldview? Each student studies only 1 family only.

Doing one person, they know them through the EAA/T situation, especially in the practicum as well as the study. It is a chance to get to know who that person is. (By studying one person they have the opportunity to get to know the whole person+ baggage).

Do they ever do case studies of the horses?

Every semester we get together with the experts to analyse the horses the reactions. What is a horse's personal situation, in the arena, box etc., … we do this informally and have a hands on practicum trying out techniques and to improve time in the arena … we problem solve?

The horse part; do your interns have horse knowledge; most of ours are not horse handlers.

Most of the interns a GC are weak on horse knowledge. We actually do a whole presentation of horse behaviour (and more).

All hands on at C, we do a lot of role-play, students are responsible for going through the notes making goals and objectives, thinking about managing the volunteers. This starts form the soft-more class and onwards. In the senior year they work alone with a mentor. They have a mentor assigned to them.

There are feedback sessions. Occasionally there is someone (expert) who can come in at the advanced level.

Problem solving.

What G mentions is very important because if you only work in one section you take on the colours of only that place but if you can go to four or five different places, shadowing or see different practical experiences this really improves your knowledge.

Contrasting EAA/T with some of our regular riding programmes so many different people for so any different fields come and present in the symposiums for our many programmes, but G always has the same group of people.

From holidays in Europe, I realised at H, which is a volunteer setting, we are able to put together everything because we have phenomenal volunteers who are time constrained. I look at that from an industry standpoint, I do not always have the time to give the maximum. There is no greater benefit for the industry. So, things get short changed Xx could not go the next step because it is volunteer-based and it's not being funded in any major way. Are EAA/T practitioners, volunteers or are we professionals, I agree that Xx has to address that and how far can it go. I do not know if they're an answer to this. We are shooting ourselves in the foot; we are so secular in our mentality. We have not done a really good job in integrating with other disciplines.

Question 12: How do we engages and integrate the stakeholders.

Without funding Xx could not go the next step because it is volunteer-based.

Researching show how it works and it helps the financial question. University is motivated by money. Xx is also motivated by money. So by an entry level that is affordable and lower level it decreases the quality to the profession and then you meet resistance. People have a poor idea of what we are doing. This meets resistance trying to raise the level.

People come to me and say - I am interested in this field; I have not volunteered for a programme at the beginning all of us had to accept this. Now I make a distinction between those who is going to be certified and those who are interested in the subject. I am so overwhelmed with preparation people feeling they need (to train). They are disconnected to reality and what we need.

If it is a local-based programme – participants can travel overnight one or twice a week. It really has to be in a university setting where people can come and eat and take all in.

Equine programme, (meaning EAA/T programme) is highly condense (compared to the) medical profession, if you really look at it, not just proven through research it works – such a tinny, little approach (EAA/T) how can we prove it.

(The way I think we can prove it is by saying that) we can in fact influence a person's life. Proof from clients that lives has been changed. We need clients to pay more. We need to integrate this concept (into our research papers and say that) because of EAA/T a challenged person can (do the following): learned to study, drive a car etc.

We do not seem to grasp that medical and education professions would respond to hearing these stories. A, in her state can get herself reimbursed for her work, whereas others cannot.

Can the curriculum address the stakeholders' can they come into the conversation?

Undermining the performance … is it the pay scale or fees that reduce the bar and now we have three different mechanisms that reduce the levels.

On-site workshops, people are relying on these for a pay structure.

Inconsistence … here it is all fragmented some of it is very good but it is fragmented how often have we said that Xx is the quintessential point that is not set up to change this. Have they spoken to other organisations that all have their own programme? We want to be a strong organisation. All the horse organisations have their own intake and pass levels. Each with their curriculum…fragmentation does not lead to strength.

We cannot find a disabilities programme in university, Para equestrian is still lost and EAA/T not even on the radar scheme. As the organisation gets bigger it gets more unwieldy. How can you open the box a little bit, how you are going to control where everything is done state by state?

Question 13: How can we come more sensitive to cross cultural sensitivities?

How can you standardise a curriculum?

Xx has trouble here- I am not sure it is possible. There is a cultural gap, between our understandings of EAA/T for instance Xx and the EAA/T organisations.

Practitioners from another country came to Israel to observe the therapy sessions. As they were watching the sessions they commented that they were not taught how to lunge a horse with a rider. They did not lunge in their country.

I found that not every country needs CPR and first Aid for Instructors, it is only recommended.

In the UK they have included coaching. We are now trying to include all these topics into the Israeli curriculum. My old curriculum is currently used in 9 Israeli colleges - they are using a course that I would recognise as awful. The colleges generally alter it by lengthening the theoretical course and reducing the practical hours, which I do not agree with. By increasing the hours, the course administrators feel they make it look more college like.

Participant: I am confused when we talk about us being EAA/T.

If the title contains the words therapy and riding this surely means that you need to be professional in both therapy and riding

Therapy and therapeutic---- hopefully we are all therapeutic, however, therapy is a professional field of enquiry.

We work with medical insurances; currently they are paying half the fee of each challenged rider. Medical insurances recognise EAA/T practitioners at a much lower level that specialists who have a degree.

To reach the higher level EAA/T has to have a degree course.

Look at what specialists have gone through to get up there to have the higher recognition. This is not the same as the therapeutic riding instructor

This sounds now very positive, as specialists can study EAA/T, and national or state level governing bodies could start recognising EAA/T. However, I do not feel it will get full recognition until the public recognise it as a profession.

In the USA there is a new profession called animal assisted therapy. This could be for Horses?

In universities they expect educators to be a Master or PhD to be educators.

I have started something here – I am trying to set a president for universities by saying that a Master of EAA/T is equivalent to a PHD. I am trying to get universities to recognise that it takes the same amount of effort to gain a PhD. in EAA/T/equine skills, as it does to receive a PhD in any other subject. So, in my own way I am trying to set the bar higher. If you start writing and have a decent thesis+ publishing chapters in books it establishes you as full fledge professional, this is equivalent to a PhD.

None of my colleagues have argued with my credentials. If you are a master level instructor of what we need then you should be capable of teaching at any college and you should not be forced to study in another field to do so.

What is the benefit of having a formal degree for EAA/T?

There are people in this country that feel that charitable organisations should not really be driving education. That should be up to the colleges or the universities; but that charitable organisations can provide materials, training sessions but the concept of education should not be restricted to smaller organisations. If Xx is about certifying, let the education develop in colleges.

Do not forget – Xx- licence to do certain things. I do not think that we need a PhD; the organisation must say what we need, and not the State. If the association says what you need it should be that way around and not the state.

Appendix 6

Appendix 6.i: Focus Group Transcript (FG7)

Focus Group 7, which had twelve people present including an employer.

Do we train the instructors sufficiently to meet the client's needs?

There should be more practical, if the course has more practical more encounters with authentic practice.

There should be more personal supervision during the practical experience.

Generally, more supervision, more one-on one during the practical more explanation to teach students how to approach practice, and more mentor to teach therapeutic skills.

It is especially important for people who are already riding instructors and are thrown in the deep end and are not given enough therapeutic skills and vision with working with horses.

For her: the horsemanship and riding knowledge is not enough for most of the people. She is not sure that most of the people know how to ride well enough or how to take care of horses.

Repeating again her sentence she added, they are unaware of the different kinds of horses.

There was not enough emphasis on the majority of clients we teach that are children with attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD). Students found that their riding skills were not good enough, and therefore did not have enough skills to work with children with ADHD. Most time is spent on the difficult cases, as they feel there should be more emphasis on them in the practice.

Some students come with knowledge and others without (riding skills) making a problem in the courses, as the ones without need to improve riding skills.

Maybe the courses should be in different stages, basic stage and advanced stages

The basic course for the majority of prospective EAA/t practitioners- then the advanced, which will include more knowledge of pathologies.

There are only five places working with physical disabilities. Most of the places work with learning disabilities. There are a few people in the country that can work with children and adults with physical disabilities

Do you feel there are enough teachers (educators) highly qualified?

– No there are not enough quality teachers (educators) around?

Do you think we are sufficiently integrated with other professions?

Do you think we should integrate more with other professions?

Together everyone says yes; we should be connected to physiotherapists and special education teachers- we should be more connected to the doctors, and Kuppat Holim doctors.

How can we integrate these people into the curriculum?

Have clinics with the doctors and physiotherapists; have more encounters with disabled people; more professional people to put their own point of view into the curriculum.

Do you want on-going clinics after you have qualified?

Yes, both in the course and afterwards

We should have more encounters with doctors.

You cannot have everyone in the course –

Yes, you need to know a little bit about all these things (pathologies etc.)

You cannot expect to learn everything from courses that lonely last for one year.

You cannot put everything in one course. Do it in two stages, or make the courses longer.

Everyone was saying that the course was too short.

Well no one will come three days a week. So, if you want to do this professionally like a lawyer then you need to put the time in to study it as your profession.

Everyone agrees the course is too short.

It is a question as to how you should approach the job, whether you think of it as a side job – or you study it as a major for your profession.

Where do you draw the line?

Maybe each one should come to the course and decide which direction he wants to specialise, e.g. emotional problems / physical disabilities.

Maybe after the courses have clinics where each person can specialise in their own favourite direction.

Bring a doctor or physiotherapist or someone to accompany them in their work.

In the past one had to attend two clinics a year of their choice.

Do you feel you have enough tools at the end of the course to start working with your clients?

It gave me something, just the initial tools, but you need to carry on studying. Most said they learned most on-the-job, afterwards.

What about supervised practice?

Laughing! I could just have come and written down the hours myself'. It is left in our hands, if you want to learn more you will go to clinics and study by yourself and teach yourself – You will become auto deductive.

You find which people to learn from in the centres.

A lot of the young instructors are not ready for the real job, and once they encounter the job they are frightened by the job.

A lot of hours dealing with hyperactive and difficult children

A lot of young instructors are afraid to start dealing with things at work as they feel they have not got enough tools.

Especially if they encounter something like multiple sclerosis they are afraid to touch it.

There should be two certificates one for basic EAA/T and another for hippo therapy

What about problem-based learning as method learning?

Everyone agree that this is a more efficient way of learning.

Any kind of learning that is more active is more efficient.

Any kind of learning that we can get feedback on is more efficient.

If we could have authentic practice it would be even better.

You become auto deductive.

The good people are the ones who teach themselves.

Something that has not been mentioned

Do you all agree that the equestrian side is important?

It is the most important.

You need to know how to work with the tool properly.

How can we improve the equestrian side?

The more you spend time around horses you will learn more

There are so many farms that do it wrong you can be more damaged by one stupid person (educator) teaching another stupid person (Prospective EAA/T practitioner).

People should only learn from people who have been living and breathing with horses.

What can colleges do to fill the gap where there is a lack of equestrian?

Just do not accept anyone without horse experience on to the course.

Do not accept anybody even if the course is small.

Then courses are able to open – colleges cannot afford it.

It doesn't matter the ones who are no good just disappear.

No, this is not true there are many terrible practitioners working in the country

Repeated emphasising the point.

There are so many ranches around the country doing terrible work.

That's not a problem parents will come to a farm for 6-8 lessons and see that nothing is happening to their child, and then leave and go to another place.

You are wrong parents come to EAA/T not knowing what it is thinking that what they get there is OK and they stay even if it is a bad place – nothing to compare what is a good or bad place.

For example, child with cerebral palsy, parents do not understand what is done (what is the therapy).

A lot of places say that they treat people and they are doing nothing.

What does the curriculum have in it to improve this situation to make the bar higher?

What should the exam be?

Maybe the exams should be very high

The colleges accept anyone who can pay.

The exams should be higher – to prevent poor learners qualifying.

Colleges are passing students at a low bar.

Yes, it is all a matter of money and publicity.

The only way to bring up the bar is to make the course longer - in stages, exams then clinics and more exams.

Courses should be longer and built in stages so that the first stages equip you to work with children from Kupat Holim (Medical insurance company in Israel) with learning disabilities.

There should be a way for farms and managers to know what practitioners are able to do – e.g. learning disabilities or physical disabilities.

Wouldn't it be enough to have mentors in the farms to accompany new practitioners – programme manager can accompany newly qualified practitioners.

Don't you think that new practitioners that come and work here should have someone like you, Z to supervise him or her?

That won't work, as places won't pay supervisors.

How do student practitioners learn to engage with employers?

Another problem is that young practitioners cannot work in-group rides because they are not safe enough to work with more than one horse at a time they do not understand the dangers.

If you do not know how to give the right horse to the rider, you can do damage.

The group gave examples of situations.

Good staff costs money. If you need good leaders, you should pay them.

Some said this is wrong you just need to teach them. You need to teach and connect to the volunteer programmes.

You need to pay people to come and work in the lessons.

Some said this would make the lessons too expensive.

Is it important that your team has qualified staff?

Would you accept an amazing horseman with just a good touch with children, - would you employ them?

This is a dilemma –

No the employer should not employ anyone without an EAA/T certification even if he is a riding instructor.

Do you think it is important to speak about multi-cultural society?

There are problems teaching orthodox children

What are the gaps in the curriculum?

Together the group said - more practice.

What are the most important topics to learn?

After you have started working what are the most importance topics

Lots of practice

Supervised one- on- one practice

Small groups – Problem-based learning

Much more knowledge of special needs and special education- to meet the needs of most of the clients

Do you think some yards feel more comfortable as they are closer to regular riding?

Do you want to see a more holistic approach?

More understanding – courses to understand the needs of these children – ADHD environmental and what exactly are **the horses** answer to this.

More therapeutic skills

More knowledge of how to reflect the successes to the other environments

Appendix 7

Appendix 7.i: Interview Transcript (IN2)

Great to speak with you; I am trying to record everything that we are saying and what I will do is that I will after a few minutes I will stop to check. I think that everything does work. I tried it and I set up a test phone call before to see that it worked. It does work with the tape. This is very good.

The first thing that I wanted to ask is **how do you think we can build a curriculum to do train EAA/T practitioners?** I call them practitioners because it covers all the different names used by different countries. How we can train them to meet the clients' needs? What is most important in your mind? What's the amount of training do you think we should do with these instructors? Everywhere have different lengths of time – everywhere I go seems to have different ideas what's needed in training and you must have your ideas about it?

Yes, they have a rustic approach in Germany and all the ones that have to do what the government says, and we are given directions and try free enterprise. Ideally, if you want to get a degree at university… a degree would be the better way to go… but we do not even have a directory of jobs – no jobs as riding instructor – it's not like the recognised thing – so ideally college would be the best education – it would be a degree programme.

First of all that's news to me, Riding Instructors are not listed as a job. So many are doing it. There must be so many people doing it.

There is a directory of occupational titles. But as I am a big riding instructor and I think it's harder to get it recognised. I think that it is the point at which we should be starting - giving it a title in the directory. I do not think anyone has taken that on. To do that is one of our problems. Are you there?

No one in the room? No, I am in the library by myself. Just you and I. Now, I am just thinking, what's going on? What does it mean certified? What does this certificate mean? If it's not listed it is like a joke.

Well its done, and basically there is no verification as it is non-profit and they have some reasons that terminology is difficult. A lot of people do not like that and prefer physiotherapy and then it does certification, certified horsemanship association certifies people with EAA/T. There are a couple of others that I think also do this. It is a model that's kind of wide and I think that you are used to in Europe. In Germany, you have to have you to meet criteria set by the government.

Overseen by the government, I think that in the USA you now have to an introductory course and even in horse industry we do that. There is nothing in the therapeutic industry. Anyone can do what he or she wants. I think if you look at the horse industry in general, it is easier to be a horse instructor and can go to specialised places, and now you can go and get a college degree. I think that's how EAA/T should go--- it makes an overall rounded person in the horse industry. Two colleges have their degrees in EAA/T, but colleges also look at things for monetary purposes. Bit sad. Generally offered by small colleges.

How would you define profile of riding instructor?

I took several things, day conferences, (discussing) working professionally in the industry, everything that EAA/T should do but does not hold the C standards and criteria of practitioner. I made an assumption that people coming in would have a riding background but in fact they did not. I thought I could start the EAA/T curriculum immediately but I couldn't. I think it's good if you to go to equine part first and then EAA/T. I think we miss out on the horse knowledge before EAA/T and people should already be teaching able-bodied riders before EAA/T. We get into bit of trouble these days because they do not have a strong horse background.

I agree with you we need to have strong equestrian background. With public demands of work, we do today; they still do not have the knowledge how to use the horse. How should we put this into training? How to put this in the course to help the client?

I do not think we clearly defined what we want. I think about it a lot. I feel we are being taken over by specialist groups.

I did a bunch of research into reflection – we had students in C who could never be riding instructors. They could not reflect on practice and not problem solve. (EAA/T

practitioners). We tried to test for people who were reflective in their work. Two groups came – one coming in and one going out. At the end, they did a retest … so there are people who can't relate the horse stuff or relate to the person. My challenge was how to teach these people. I always think if you have horse knowledge as a base, its important. Without it there is no reflection. You have to have the knowledge base and the areas to critically utilise … I used problem-based learning, research sharing and discussing it.

Have we got educators who know how to do this stuff?

It is a concern in this country that people do not have these skills therefore creating a safety issue. I do not know if these people are working with credentials, but there is not enough knowledge of the job.

Not enough papers or stuff coming out of this. I feel that we have got to have more confidence in what we are doing. I feel we are isolated and insulated.

Money is very bad at the moment. We do not have opportunity any more to do things.

Do you think we get our students to understand the different roles played by the horse themselves, and what role the client plays?

I tried to do this, this and E and F does it. But whether the people today do it, we are all old gurus. We are actually struggling, I feel I have stagnated, we do not meet anymore, we do not have discussions, do not have the skills, we need to question some of those people who are teaching now to see if they know what they are doing basically. Then, how do you reach these people? I do not think it's happening here that people will do a 4 -year college degree. Israel, UK, Canada, this could happen.

You don't want rigid organisations and people to lose their identity and then people can't express themselves.

Some of us trying to push for more creative curriculum as the industry grows,

Do you think that following the course students understand their role?

I do not think it's clear enough what their role is, or what their job is.

I do not think students fully understand their role and how they should work?

A good goal is to get them round safely, now I am talking about an example, about a child whose perfect on top of horse but when he gets home, he needs to achieve being a model citizen its, not just having them perfect on the horse. If we gonna become more professional, also its generalising the skills (transferrable skills). I think one of the challenges is we have therapists and the mental health people, and then we have the EAA/T practitioners and they keep getting pushed into the barn (pushed out). These other people will say that we are out of our league; we have had this issue before. We probably are the old guys ignoring the therapist and we do what we like. But the younger ones are staying in practitioner cubbyholes and not doing well and not having a clue what to do by putting anyone on a horse.

How do we bring the industry to next level? We may be at odds with our national organisations coz it's all money driven in the end, anyway.

In Israel because money leads – Colleges cut out topics as students may fail them.

Ethics – trying to think about someone connected to ethics. Another area we need to think about – environmental skills. When a child comes to ride we have to give them the right environment like non-threatening environment. The horse has to be safe and willing to have the rider etc. The skill of practitioner is that she can build perfect environment for the child so the child can move forward and we can get some change. You have to understand the disability and disabled child say with autism that sees the arena as a shark infested lake. I feel that a lot of people coming to riding arena leave their therapeutic skills behind. I feel we kind of missed the boat as riding instructors. There is no job title. There is no EAA/T job title. If we got this right, we could develop a body of knowledge that is correct for our work. At the moment, anyone can do this and it's not working.

In Israel are you trying to get government involved and get licensing. It is the only way to get an EAA/T practitioner to be a professional.

Who are we, how can we claim we are professional, I think EAA/T has a hard time – it's easier for those who have a previous degree they have the backing of organisations and previous knowledge, these people are only professional coz they did 4-year course at university and government accepts that… making it professional. With a college degree

like C, with a 4-year degree we jump-start the industry and help it. Problem is you spend all the money going to learn, then no one is willing to pay you a decent salary and, then you can't do what you want to do. People coming out of colleges are really stuck with nowhere to go to work apart from the colleges or do something else for a living and EAA/T becomes part time. Income is very important otherwise you can't live from this job. Costs 50K and you earn $5 an hr.

We need to get more hard data to justify everything. I have increased my prices and am still full of students.

Appendix 8

Appendix 8.i: Delphi Survey Informed Consent

Title of project: Equine Assisted Activities/Therapy: Towards a Future Curriculum

Principal Investigator: Anita Shkedi

Supervisor: Dr. Vivienne Walkup

Email: v.j.walkup@derby.ac.uk

Doctoral Candidate: Anita Shkedi

Affiliation: University of Derby

Contact information:

Email: anitashkedi@gmail.com

Cell: 972 (0) 547. 205. 886

www.intra.org.li

Purpose of this enquiry:

My name is Anita Shkedi. I immigrated to Israel from London, England in 1985 and founded the first therapeutic riding programmed in Israel. In 1988 I developed Israel's first therapeutic riding instructor diploma course. I am the founding director and one of the therapeutic riding educators/instructors in my centre, the Israel National Therapeutic Riding Association (INTRA), as well as at the academic institution, Ariel University in Ramat Aviv in Israel. I am a committee member of the Therapeutic Riding Professional Committee of Israel founded in 2010. Currently I am a doctoral student at the University of Derby, UK where the emphasis of my doctoral investigation is to determine the extent to which current educational practices prepare prospective EAA/T practitioners. I am working closely with Vivienne Walkup, who is my principal supervisor for my doctorate and is advising me on all aspects of the research.

I would like to know if you would be willing to take part in this research study that is looking for gaps and weaknesses that might exist in the current EAA/T curriculum. Pinpointing gaps and weaknesses, and then addressing them, will allow for informed recommendations that can upgrade future curriculum. Ultimately this will aim to improve the learned outcomes for the EAA/T graduates, enabling them to provide the most effective professional practice for enhancing the quality of life for challenged and disabled riders.

The purpose of this informed consent is to invite you to be an **expert participant** in the Delphi Method of enquiry, which is a major component of my methodology in the doctoral investigation. You have been chosen as an expert participant as you have considerable knowledge about and experience with EAA/T and are capable of representing the views of your peers. The Delphi Method is a flexible research technique that explores new ideas within and surrounding information systems' body of knowledge that are present within an EAA/T curriculum. The Delphi Method can take an in depth look at the way the EAA/T curriculum is performing, as well as looking at its resources, to determine whether they are sufficient in quality and quantity, to ensure the production of excellent EAA/T graduates.

The Delphi Method brings together a group of experts who provide information and responses to the questions anonymously. The anonymity allows you, as a participant, to freely express your opinions without undue social pressure to conform. The answers put forward can come from your personal opinions, judgments, fundamental differences and conflicting methodologies, which can influence the issues. As the Delphi Method receives the information, it is distilled, (fractionated, modified and refined) to be returned to you, the participant, as feedback from the collective thoughts and responses of the group, (Mitroff & Turnoff 2002, p. 22). Once these results are confirmed, the Delphi continues by conducting an additional two rounds of surveys. In each round your decisions will be evaluated on merit, rather than on who has proposed the idea. It is anticipated that by the third round the judgments collected will reach a collective consensus. In the case of my study, the Delphi questions are designed to encourage thinking about the future of EAA/T curricula and envisage the possibilities of transformation and transmission of the existing EAA/T diploma course into a new format.

Procedure:

Initially you will be asked to complete in one week the online Delphi initial questionnaire **(Round 1)**, which asks you to rate and rank topics, which are concerned with educational practices used to prepare prospective EAA/T practitioners. Once the questionnaire is completed and returned to me via **Survey Monkey**, an online survey format. The results will be distilled and analysed and then returned as participants' collective responses. After receiving these responses, you have the opportunity to make further amendments to your response.

The confirmed results of round one are used to facilitate a more focused questionnaire, **(Round 2).** The second-round questionnaire will again require your rating and ranking of the refined topics. These collected responses to the questionnaire will be distilled analysed and returned to you for any further amendment.

Following completion of round two, the final distilling and analysis of the collective results will be used to build the final questionnaire, **(Round 3).** This questionnaire will be even more focused regarding the rating and ranking of topics. This final round of this Delphi survey, as stated previously, will try to achieve an expert group consensus for future recommendations.

Confidentiality:

All the information you provide will be strictly confidential, and your name will not appear on the questionnaire. Instead, your questionnaire will contain an identification number that is known to me as the principal investigator of this study. This identification number is used to note that you have returned your questionnaire and will not be attached to the general survey itself. The survey will be sent to you by way of a special link to **Survey Monkey** provided in an email from me. Once you have completed the online survey, it is returned via Survey monkey to me. Any further enquiries should be sent to my email address anitashkedi@gmail.com

Note About Voluntary Nature of Participation and Statement About Compensation:

Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or may discontinue your participation at any time during the online survey. Emailing me at any time can do this.

While we cannot compensate you for your time, your participation will be invaluable to our project as we seek an understanding of the current EAA/T instructor curriculum.

Information About This Study:

You will have the opportunity to ask, and to have answered, all your questions about this research by e-mailing or calling the principal investigator, whose contact information is listed at the top of this letter. All inquiries are confidential.

References:

Hesse-Biber, SJ & Leavy, P 2006, 'The Ethics of Social Research' in: The Practice of Qualitative Research Sage Publications Ch. 4, pp. 59-89, Available from: ww.sagepub.com/upm-data/34088_Chapter 4.pdf

Mitroff, II & Turoff, M 2002, Philosophical and methodological foundations of Delphi, in Linstone, H A, Turoff, M, Eds 2002, *The Delphi Method Techniques and Applications*, Ch. 2B, pp. 21-22, Available from: is.njit.edu/pubs/delphibook/delphibook.pdf, (7th April 2013)

Survey monkey: www.surveymonkey.com

The layout is an adaptation of the informed consent designed by Hesse-Biber, SJ & Leavy, (2006)

Participant's Agreement Statement:

If you agree to participate in our study, please sign your name and date to this form, and send it back to us in the stamped and addressed envelope within one week of your receipt of this letter.

****

I have read the information provided above. I voluntarily agree to participate in this study: Equine Assisted Activities /Therapy: Towards a Future Curriculum

After it is signed, I understand I will receive a survey form via e-mail, completing it and returning within a week to Anita Shkedi at anitshkedi@gmail.com.

Name: (Please print)

Affiliation:

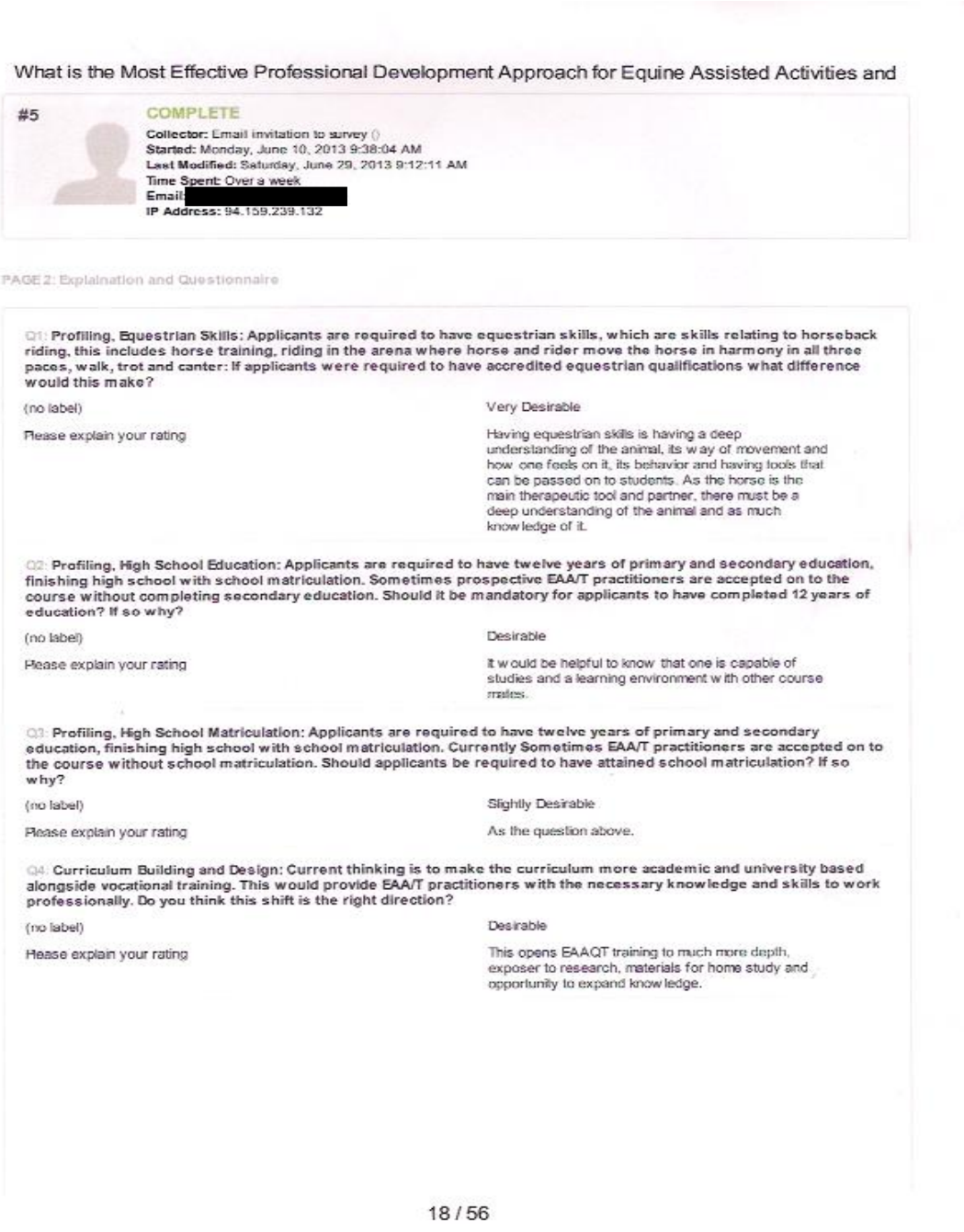
Date:

Signature

Appendix 9

Appendix 9.i: Round 1 Original Delphi Expert Survey

An original survey filled in by a Delphi Expert. The survey was sent out via Survey Monkey to fourteen participants.



What is the Most Effective Professional Development Approach for Equine Assisted Activities and

#5

COMPLETE

Collector: Email invitation to survey ()
Started: Monday, June 10, 2013 9:38:04 AM
Last Modified: Saturday, June 29, 2013 9:12:11 AM
Time Spent: Over a week
Email: [redacted]
IP Address: 94.159.239.132

PAGE 2: Explaination and Questionnaire

Q1: **Profiling, Equestrian Skills: Applicants are required to have equestrian skills, which are skills relating to horseback riding, this includes horse training, riding in the arena where horse and rider move the horse in harmony in all three paces, walk, trot and canter: If applicants were required to have accredited equestrian qualifications what difference would this make?**

(no label) — Very Desirable

Please explain your rating — Having equestrian skills is having a deep understanding of the animal, its way of movement and how one feels on it, its behavior and having tools that can be passed on to students. As the horse is the main therapeutic tool and partner, there must be a deep understanding of the animal and as much knowledge of it.

Q2: **Profiling, High School Education: Applicants are required to have twelve years of primary and secondary education, finishing high school with school matriculation. Sometimes prospective EAA/T practitioners are accepted on to the course without completing secondary education. Should it be mandatory for applicants to have completed 12 years of education? If so why?**

(no label) — Desirable

Please explain your rating — It would be helpful to know that one is capable of studies and a learning environment with other course mates.

Q3: **Profiling, High School Matriculation: Applicants are required to have twelve years of primary and secondary education, finishing high school with school matriculation. Currently Sometimes EAA/T practitioners are accepted on to the course without school matriculation. Should applicants be required to have attained school matriculation? If so why?**

(no label) — Slighly Desirable

Please explain your rating — As the question above.

Q4: **Curriculum Building and Design: Current thinking is to make the curriculum more academic and university based alongside vocational training. This would provide EAA/T practitioners with the necessary knowledge and skills to work professionally. Do you think this shift is the right direction?**

(no label) — Desirable

Please explain your rating — This opens EAAQT training to much more depth, exposer to research, materials for home study and opportunity to expand knowledge.

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Q11: **Supervised Practice: EAA/T students are required to complete hands on training (under supervision) with horses and riders: Should there be a minimum number of hours of supervised practice that the students need to complete in order to qualify? If so, how many hours?**

(no label)	Very Desirable
Please explain your rating	There should be no less than 50 hours I think, this is the minimum time to follow practitioners through practice in which they can develop as new teachers (while getting feedback) and be part of process.

Q12: **Inservice Training (IST): Workshops and clinics are necessary to maintain a qualification. Do you think it should be mandatory for practitioners to attend refresher courses annually? If so why?**

(no label)	Desirable
Please explain your rating	This would maintain a much higher professional level and give a good opportunity to share gained knowledge. Also, as many practitioners do not encounter all pathologies and situations, thing are forgotten Also this would maintain interest for many practitioners that feel "worn out".

Q13: **Professionalism: Professional recognition is the formal acknowledgement of an individual's professional status. A professional has the right to practice according to a set of standards and is subject to regulatory controls: Do you think EAA/T students when qualified should be recognized as professionals (and therefore subject to regulatory controls etc)?**

(no label)	Desirable
Please explain your rating	This again would maintain a higher standard country wide and keep centers at a high standard.

Q14: **Integration with Paramedics: EAA/T students can benefit from communicating with other healthcare professionals by learning about interventions, treatments and therapies. Do you think the curriculum should include teachings on the value of integrating with these healthcare professionals?**

(no label)	Desirable
Please explain your rating	Practitioners should know to read other healthcare professionals materials and understand. This would be benefit for the patient.

Q15: **Teacher Training: An advance training program for academic educators will enable teachers to maintain their skills and knowledge to the highest level. Do you think there should be professional training courses?**

(no label)	Slightly Desirable
Please explain your rating	For individuals that would like to expand their knowledge in a certain field and become professionals in that field it could be great!

Q16: **Mentor/Coach: Mentor/Coach training schemes: A mentor/coach supports students and newly qualified practitioners in their practical teaching. Do you think mentors/coaches should have qualifications in mentoring and coaching skills?**

(no label)	Slightly Desirable
Please explain your rating	This would give practitioners skills that can be well used in a therapeutic relationship and help to develop.

Q17: **Supplementary Study: The EAA/T curriculum administrators feel the curriculum is restricted by the academic time table it is able to secure on a tight budget. An academic timetable secures students, teachers rooms and time slots) To compensate these restrictions it has been necessary push boundaries and develop strategies to facilitate this. Do you think it's possible to develop strategies for students to supplement their classroom learning? If so, what strategies?**

(no label)	Desirable
Please explain your rating	Mainly by PBL and active learning methods.

Q5: **Basic Topics, Horse Knowledge: Horse care and management are fundamentally the foundation of any EAA/T curriculum; this includes day to day stable facility management, horse handling, horse structure and function, horse nutrition and horse health management: Do you think horse care and management should become the foundation of the EAA/T curriculum? If so why?**

(no label)

Slightly Desirable

Please explain your rating

I think most should arrive with basic knowledge of this kind. As they are to be part of functioning teem in a horse riding facility. Again deeper knowledge of the animal helps understand it as a partner and our main tool. In the barrier of time in such a curriculum there is not much time for this.

Q6: **Basic Topics Critical Thinking Skills: An EAA/T curriculum can improve critical thinking skills, observation skills and reflective skills: Do you think about every EAA/T curriculum should include specific teaching modules on improving critical thinking skills, observation and reflective skills?**

(no label)

Desirable

Please explain your rating

I think these are skills that if gained can make a therapist much better. The ability to observe, think critically and reflect is the foundation of efficient teaching as well as progressive therapy and a very important part in the therapist's part in a therapeutic relationship.

Q7: **Basic Topics, Self-Management Skills: EAA/T students need to be in possession of self-management and self-awareness skills: Do you think EAA/T students need to receive training in self management and self-awareness skills?**

(no label)

Slightly Desirable

Please explain your rating

I think that in the boundaries of time in such a curriculum it would be difficult to change ones self awareness and self management skills. Anyhow, I think it would be right to touch it in training as methods for students to observe themselves.

Q8: **Basic Topics, Pathologies: EAA/T students require greater knowledge of pathologies, manifestations of diseases, disabilities and/or challenges: Do you think the curriculum should provide specific modules on these subjects? If so why?**

(no label)

Desirable

Please explain your rating

It is very important for students to know the common pathologies they may encounter as well as understanding material from other therapists. Manifestation of diseases is also very important as in EAAT we would like to have a holistic approach that touches all the aspects of the disability or difficulty.

Q9: **Basic Topics, Manifestations: EAA/T students require a greater knowledge of manifestations of the diseases, disabilities and or challenges (manifestations are how the diseases, disabilities, and or challenges manifest themselves): Would it be beneficial for EAA/T students to receive specific teaching on the manifestations? If so why?**

(no label)

Very Desirable

Please explain your rating

As mentioned above.

Q10: **Basic Teaching Paradigms: Teaching strategies that encourage experiential learning are necessary. Eg. Problem Based Learning (PBL) and Active Learning (AL): Should the curriculum include teaching strategies in the curriculum for experiential learning?**

(no label)

Very Desirable

Please explain your rating

This is a great way to encourage students to deepen their knowledge as the professionalize. Also encourages and regulates practitioners into doing self teaching and deepening knowledge when encountering problems or new situations.

Q18: **Academic Quality Control: Quality assurance mechanisms used by universities maintain a high standard of academia, ensure course work and teaching is reviewed and evaluated and that feedback gathered. Do you think the EAA/T curriculum should be subject to an academic quality assurance test? If so, what differences do you think this would offer the curriculum?**

(no label)	Slightly Desirable
Please explain your rating	Could make the curriculum constant and high standard country wide.

Q19: **If we had to limit the number of indicators* included in a future curriculum, which ones, from the list below, would you choose to keep? Please rank a minimum of 5 indicators, starting from the most desirable. You can rank up 10 indicators. Indicators not chosen, should be ticked as "not ranked as the top 5/10 indicators." In making your decisions, please consider the following guidelines for your answers: ★ Does the indicator bridge a gap currently existing in the curriculum? ★ Does the indicator chosen raise the bar of the existing curriculum? ★ Does the indicator improve the quality of knowledge and instruction? ★ Is the indicator helpful in prioritising strategies for the effective management of ★ the curriculum? ★ Is the indicator useful for guiding changes that aim to professionalise the EAA/T curriculum? ★ Is the indicator useful, in so far that it will improve student awareness and ethical attitudes? * An indicator represents the topic of each question. Using the ranking scale rank the topics in order of their importance, and how useful they they are for improving the quality of service for a prospective EAA/T practitioner.**

Professionalism	1
Profiling: Equestrian Skills	2
Supervised Practice	3
Basic Topics:Pathologies	4
Basic Topics:Manifestations	5
Basic Topics:Teaching Paradigms	6
In Service Training	7
Mentor /Coach	8
Integration with Paramedics	9
Basic Topics: Horse knowledge	10
Curriculum Building and Design	11
Teacher Training	12
Supplementary Study	13
Academic: Quality Control	14
Profiling: Highschool Education	Not ranked in the 5-10 rankings
Profiling: High School Matriculation	Not ranked in the 5-10 rankings

Q20: Do you wish to provide comments to explain why you have chosen the topics for ranking. This additional information is optional, but could help us to understand the reasons why some indicators are valued over others.	*Respondent skipped this question*

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Q21: **Please enter: Number, affiliation.**

Number:	10

Appendix 10

Appendix 10.i: Delphi Expert Survey Round 1 Questionnaire (QR1-20)

Expert EAA/T practitioners were asked to answer a possible twenty questions, which included ranking topics. These first questions allowed an extensive exploration of issues without engaging a large practitioner population sample.

1. Training, riding in the arena where horse and rider move the horse in harmony in all three paces, walk, trot and canter: If applicants were required to have accredited equestrian qualifications what difference would this make?
2. Profiling, High School Education: Applicants are required to have twelve years of primary and secondary education, finishing high school with school matriculation. Sometimes prospective EAA/T practitioners are accepted on to the course without completing secondary education. Should it be mandatory for applicants to have completed 12 years of education? If so why?
3. Profiling, High School Matriculation: Applicants are required to have twelve years of primary and secondary education, finishing high school with school matriculation. Currently Sometimes EAA/T practitioners are accepted on to the course without school matriculation. Should applicants be required to have attained school matriculation? If so why?
4. Curriculum Building and Design: Current thinking is to make the curriculum more academic and university-based alongside vocational training. This would provide EAA/T practitioners with the necessary knowledge and skills to work professionally. Do you think this shift is the right direction?
5. Basic Topics, Horse Knowledge: Horse care and management are fundamentally the foundation of any EAA/T curriculum; this includes day to day stable facility management, horse handling, horse structure and function, horse nutrition and horse health management: Do you think horse care and management should become the foundation of the EAA/T curriculum? If so why?
6. Basic Topics Critical Thinking Skills: An EAA/T curriculum can improve critical thinking skills, observation skills and reflective skills: Do you think about every

EAA/T curriculum should include specific teaching modules on improving critical thinking skills, observation and reflective skills?

7. Basic Topics, Self-Management Skills: EAA/T students need to be in possession of self-management and self-awareness skills: Do you think EAA/T students need to receive training in self-management and self-awareness skills?
8. Basic Topics, Pathologies: EAA/T students require greater knowledge of pathologies, manifestations of diseases, disabilities and/or challenges: Do you think the curriculum should provide specific modules on these subjects? If so why?
9. Basic Topics, Manifestations: EAA/T students require a greater knowledge of manifestations of the diseases, disabilities and or challenges (manifestations are how the diseases, disabilities, and or challenges manifest themselves): Would it be beneficial for EAA/T students to receive specific teaching on the manifestations? If so why?
10. Basic Teaching Paradigms: Teaching strategies that encourage experiential learning are necessary. E.g. Problem-based Learning (PBL) and Active Learning (AL): Should the curriculum include teaching strategies in the curriculum for experiential learning?
11. Supervised Practice: EAA/T students are required to complete hands on training (under supervision) with horses and riders: Should there be a minimum number of hours of supervised practice that the students need to complete to qualify? If so, how many hours?
12. In-service Training (IST): Workshops and clinics are necessary to maintain a qualification. Do you think it should be mandatory for practitioners to attend refresher courses annually? If so why?
13. Professionalism: Professional recognition is the formal acknowledgement of an individual's professional status. A professional has the right to practice according to a set of standards and is subject to regulatory controls: Do you think EAA/T students when qualified should be recognised as professionals (and therefore subject to regulatory controls etc.)?
14. Integration with Paramedics: EAA/T students can benefit from communicating with other healthcare professionals by learning about interventions, treatments and

therapies. Do you think the curriculum should include teachings on the value of integrating with these healthcare professionals?

15. Teacher Training: An advance-training programme for academic educators will enable teachers to maintain their skills and knowledge to the highest level. Do you think there should be professional training courses?
16. Mentor/Coach: Mentor/Coach training schemes: A mentor/coach supports students and newly qualified practitioners in their practical teaching. Do you think mentors/coaches should have qualifications in mentoring and coaching skills?
17. Supplementary Study: The EAA/T curriculum administrators feel the curriculum is restricted by the academic timetable it is able to secure on a tight budget. An academic timetable secures students, teachers rooms and time slots) to compensate these restrictions it has been necessary push boundaries and develop strategies to facilitate this. Do you think it is possible to develop strategies for students to supplement their classroom learning? If so, what strategies?
18. Academic Quality Control: Quality assurance mechanisms used by universities maintain a high standard of academia; ensure course work and teaching is reviewed and evaluated and that feedback gathered. Do you think the EAA/T curriculum should be subject to an academic quality assurance test? If so, what differences do you think this would offer the curriculum?

19. If we had to limit the number of indicators* included in a future curriculum, which ones, from the list below,

Would you choose to keep? Please rank a minimum of 5 indicators, starting from the most desirable.

You can rank up 10 indicators. Indicators not chosen should be ticked as "not ranked as the top 5/10 indicators."

In making your decisions, please consider the following guidelines for your answers:

★ Does the indicator bridge a gap currently existing in the curriculum?

★ Does the indicator chosen raise the bar of the existing curriculum?

★ Does the indicator improve the quality of knowledge and instruction?

★Is the indicator helpful in prioritising strategies for the effective management of the curriculum?

★ Is the indicator useful, for guiding changes that aim to professionalise the EAA/T curriculum?

★ Is the indicator useful; in so far that it will improve student awareness and ethical attitudes?

An indicator represents the topic of each question.

Using the ranking scale rank the topics in order of their importance, and how useful they are for improving the quality of service for a prospective EAA/T practitioner.

20. Do you wish to provide comments to explain why you have chosen the topics for ranking? This additional information is optional, but could help us to understand the reasons why some indicators are valued over others.

Appendix 11

Appendix 11.i: Delphi Expert Survey Round 1 Feedback (QR1-19)

No participants added further comments in question 20.

Question	%	Feedback from Participants
1	61.54	Every answer suggested that this was desirable and in some cases, very desirable. Generally, it was thought undesirable to come into the field of EAA/T without horse experience. Some suggested that it was important to have a deep understanding of the animal, and if possible horsemanship skills attained prior to certification. In Israel, it was suggested that there be a National accreditation. However, some participants suggested that not all equestrian exams indicate a good horseman. Insisting on equestrian qualifications was not always beneficial and could prevent good candidates with the right level of knowledge and experience applying. There is a deep divide within the US whether equestrian skills are necessary. The divide occurs when it comes to working or not with mental health issues. It was suggested that one does not know horses unless one has been active for a good amount of time (years) in at least some equine discipline.
2	53.85	It was thought that it is desirable to be capable of studying in a learning environment with other course mates. A school education of 12 years ensured a level of maturity able to understand some of the basic concepts. Being able to stick to a school programme shows the capacity for integration and thinking process. Colleges and Universities look for high school education. Student age limit no younger than 18. Some participants said it must be mandatory that students have 12 years of education. EAA/T was not a substitute for good basic training. It was suggested that a mandatory period of time could be given to establish foundation skills for a university level course. 15.3% of the participants thought that it was undesirable. It was mentioned that this question eliminated the student that had received alternative methods of education.

Question	%	Feedback from Participants
3	46.15	Everyone chose to answer in one of the three sections of desirability. It was suggested that high school equivalence should be required. Having matriculation indicates a certain basic level of knowledge. Some responders suggested that every EAA/T practitioner must have a basic training. However, some said it detracted from the fact that many "horse people" who may have learning disabilities, can be excellent therapists. They should be given the chance to enter the course. Matriculation demands can lose good candidates that have the right knowledge and experience but no school matriculation.
4	69.24	Generally, it was felt that this shift was the right direction. However, participants were concerned how long it would take to make a shift needed as well as teaching the people to teach the courses. A university education can take some time to achieve in countries where they have just started certification. This shift would widen the spectrum; give more depth and opportunity, by opening EAA/T to more in-depth learning, research materials for home study and opportunity to expand knowledge. Concerns: Very desirable to have a curriculum more academic and university-based as long as the hands-on skills with horses are not deemed less important. To be accepted as an alternative therapy, there needs to be an acceptable level of study. It could be a staged (steps, levels), qualification, which would provide hours logged. The curriculum must not limit practical learning for the sake of theory. Desirable, but Colleges/ Universities may not be equipped to provide the practicum. Since EAA/T practitioners should be horse people, it may detract many academics that would not be willing to stand in an arena for hours. This EAA/T course should result in academic qualifications and not vocational training. There must be a balance between experiential learning, hands on, and academic classroom-based learning.
5	46.0	Almost half the responders thought that horse care and management must be a required topic, and that there was a need to be a horse person first. The student should have knowledge of the horse before working with it. Knowledge of horse care and management are complimentary to the skills in the field- EAA/T requires a high level. The horse can be dangerous and the instructor needs to understand the horse. One participant suggested the question was too narrow, and thought that it should have included a broad base of horse knowledge that includes anatomy, functional conformation study, and foundation knowledge.

Question	%	Feedback from Participants
6	61.54	There was a high level of agreement amongst participants that the EAA/T instructor needed to be a person who can self- reflect and think critically. Self-reflection is a skill that makes a therapist much better able to observe and think critically. Reflection was the foundation of effective teaching and progressive therapy. The instructor must be able to think out of the box. It was suggested that this was the basis of excellence in developing the ability to assess any situation and use task analysis. Some discussed critical thinking and reflection as the most important skills.
7	38.46	Some suggested that this question was not clearly defined. Others suggested that self- awareness was extremely important when it came to handling horses. Equally, self-awareness skills are necessary to be effectively aware of your student. In the boundaries of the current curriculum a participant said it was difficult to achieve in the time frame of the current course. Accurate self-awareness will promote growth and development. Must be able to differentiate self and personal feelings in order to observe the rider and solve the problems. Requires maturity and self-awareness. Self-awareness was like mirroring. There were almost equal percentages between slightly desirable, desirable and very desirable.
8	53.85	Generally, it was thought that it was very important for students to know common pathologies, as this was a fundamental component of our work. The more knowledge the better the service. However, there was some concern as to how one balances the amount taught to gain good working knowledge, as one does not have to be a medical doctor or physical therapist.
9	69.23	Manifestations were regarded highly important - more important that labels of disabilities. Some responders wrote that EAA/T is dealing with clinical manifestations and not with systemic treatments. The EAA/T practitioner needs to know about the manifestations of challenges in order to design the therapeutic interventions. It was suggested by one respondent that when you understand your observations, it then is possible for you to make adaptions to your horse techniques in order to meet the clients' needs.
10	76.92	Most said that training in experiential leaning, problem-based learning (PBL) and active learning (AL) was necessary and critical. Students need to be able to integrate theoretical knowledge with practice through teaching strategies. A student must learn teaching strategies, as it is not enough to know what you want to say, you should know how to say it. It is a great way for students to deepen their knowledge. Acquiring a greater depth in knowledge is essential for carrying out strategies and remediation. Very suitable for adult learners.

Question	%	Feedback from Participants
11	92.31	This question drew a high degree of consensus; however, there appeared to be no consistency in the number of hours suggested for practicum. These are some of the respondents' suggestions: It was very important that a student studies to be a teacher for at least 150 hours and not less than 50 hours. Time frame should be on meeting competence rather than length of time. Qualitative supervised practice can either be 120 hours, 500 hours, or 25 hours during the course and then 75 hours assisting/volunteering.
12	46.15	Half the respondents thought it was suggested that it was very desirable to keep practitioners updated. It was important to continue learning - never stop adding knowledge. It was felt that this was a method of spreading knowledge and transferring it from place to place. In addition, in- service training would maintain a much higher level of professionalism. One respondent was concerned that methods used to gain new knowledge were overrated, especially if one was forced to attend continual education sessions.
13	61.54	Generally, it was felt that professionalism enhanced high standards, regulatory controls and validation. Important to communicate that qualified people are recognised. It becomes a serious problem if there are no standards to maintain the level of practice. With no controls people often fall into an abysmal routine. It is desirable for insurance purposes. It affects the length and depth of the curriculum.
14	53.85	Over half the respondents agreed that it is very important for students to be aware of other paramedical professions, and learn emergency interventions. Listening to service users and clinicians in a teaching environment makes sense of theory.
15	46.15	It was suggested that it is currently problematic to engage in training courses for teachers, however it was desirable as the training courses adds to the professionalism of EAA/T. It was suggested that teachers need a high level of knowledge but also need to learn how to manage students.
16	53.85	The question arose- who would do the quality control? It was suggested that a mentor should have at least 5-year experience in EAA/T and should have participated in mentoring courses. Having increased skills in EAA/T and teaching would help develop the mentors teaching skills. There should be some kind of protection system established for the mentor, as the current EAA/T course does not appear to be long enough for the students to engage in sufficient supervision to become validated practitioners.

Question	%	Feedback from Participants
17	53.85	On the one hand participants felt that as there were practical limits to the course there was a need to give to the student's time to work by themselves and be given home tasks that involve problem-based learning and active learning. Crucial self-directed study allows for flexibility from the candidate's On-line study would be beneficial. On the other hand, one responder felt that the curriculum should fit the boundaries of the academic institutions.
18	30.77	It was suggested that it was very important that there are national standards, quality control and academic quality assurance. It was suggested that it was important to be tested and evaluated. Academic course needs academic quality assurances. Having quality assurance can impact academic freedom. In the UK, there is no acceptance by other organisations if there are no quality assurances. It must be a recognised course if the intention is to be accepted by employers. One participant suggests that the question is too complex for Survey Monkey.
19		The first 10 Rankings: 1st Profiling: Equestrian Skills 2nd Basic Topics: Teaching Paradigms 3rd Basic Topics: Horse 3rd Supervised Practice 4th Profiling: High School Education 5th Basic Topics: Manifestations 6th Basic Topics: Pathologies 7th Curriculum Building and Design 8th In Service Training 9th Professionalism 10th Mentor /Coach To note that the ranking results do not match the % scores of the first 18 questions. 1st, #11 – 92.31% 2nd, #10 –76.92% 3rd, # 4 – 69.24% 5th, #9 – 69.23% 6th, #1 & #6 – 61.54% 7th, #8, #14, #16, #18 – 53.85%

Appendix 12

Appendix 12.i: Delphi Expert Survey Round 2 Questionnaire

Doctorate: Work-based Project Title:

Equine Assisted Activities or Therapy: Towards a Future Curriculum

Anita Shkedi, M.Ed. SRN. HV. Obs. and TRI (Therapeutic Riding Instructor)

First Supervisor: Dr. V.J. Walkup; Second Supervisor: Professor D. Hayes

Thank you for participating in this Delphi Survey, and thank you for your responses. These following questions are for Round Two of the Delphi Survey. I have chosen to send the questions in a word format, which may be easier to use than Survey Monkey.

Questionnaire with a Delphi Expert Response

1. Collectively you have shared your thoughts and feelings about **Equestrian Skill**, which to recap is a comprehensive term used in all EAA/T and riding models, internationally to mean any form of horseback riding - mounted riding in the saddle and/or vaulting.

From your experience, learning and practice, please suggest what level of equestrian skill and experience would be sufficient for an EAA/T practitioner? Please explain your reasoning. *Answer: Qualifications and/or professional full time experience equivalent at least 3 years working with horses. I would also include a person who has been working with horses professionally for a period of at least 5 years as qualified, but it is hard to measure. I would personally describe an experienced horse person as one who has been around horses for a long time, can assess their behaviour and soundness, and can ride and handle horses on the ground, and can bring about safe and positive behaviour in the horse, in both riding therapy and ground work therapy.*

If you believe that different skill levels and experience are required for different categories of workers who are associated with EAA/T, please explain the reasons behind your thinking. *Answer: I believe there should always be an experienced qualified horse person present as described above. Certainly, as well the experienced horse person there would most likely be qualified physiotherapists, psychotherapist or other health care professionals working with the client. But I feel they should also have a good grounding in horsemanship for the reasons above.*

c. If you separate the skill levels and experience for different categories of workers, how thorough does the qualification have to be for each grouping?

The categories of workers in the field of EAA/T include: therapeutic riding instructors, sports riding for the disabled instructors, riding for the disabled instructors, hippo therapists, occupational therapists and other health care providers that include speech language pathologists/speech therapist and psychologists, who work with the client both on the horse and on the ground, as well as therapists who generally work with clients only on the ground e.g. mental health workers, psychologists, social workers, and more.

Categories of EAA/ T Workers	Optional Comments for (C)
Therapeutic riding instructors/riding for the disabled instructors	BHSAI or equivalent (UK) and a riding therapy qualification Plus qualified hippo therapists /occupational therapists/speech language pathologists/psychologists (with a good grounding in horsemanship)
Sports riding for the disabled	As above
Healthcare: hippo therapists /occupational therapists/speech language pathologists/psychologists	As above

Categories of EAA/ T Workers	Optional Comments for (C)
Healthcare: mental health workers/psychologists/social workers/and more	I believe at least one person should be a highly qualified horse person as described in 1a. For ground work therapy, I feel there needs to be a level of expertise in natural/classical horsemanship, or other experienced horse handling skills so as the horses are trained to give accurate feedback. The horse facilitator should be knowledgeable and sensitive enough to hold that space, and accurately understand the feedback the horses are giving. (As I said earlier on the practitioner needs to be able to bring about safe and positive behaviour in the horse, in both riding therapy and groundwork therapy). When working with clients with mental health issues I believe a person trained in mental health or psychology/counselling should also be present and have a good grounding in horsemanship.

2. Horsemanship and horse care and management

Horsemanship: Is a variety of practices that can teach horses certain behaviours when asked to do so by humans. These practices can be carried out by natural horsemen, groundwork trainers, dressage, show jumping, eventing, cutting, reining, western pleasure, barrel racing, trail riding, therapeutic riding, and hippo therapy trainers.

Horse care and Management can be one or all, of the following: Horse knowledge that includes physical and psychological care, nutrition and feeding, functional anatomy and physiology, grooming, hoof care, leg care bandaging, veterinary care, dental care, coping with minor ailments, colic parasites and more…

What would you consider as the baseline level for EAA/T practitioners in horsemanship and horse care and management?

If you believe this should this differ for the various categories of workers associated with equine assisted activities and therapy (EAA/T)? Please explain.

If you feel that these two subjects should have a separate qualification, then how thorough does the qualification have to be for each subject? Please explain the reasons for your opinions.

Answer: I would start at a baseline as described above that anyone working in the field of EAA/T should have been around horses for at least 5 years, can assess their behaviour and soundness, and can ride and handle horses on the ground, therefore able to bring about safe and positive behaviour in the horse, in both riding therapy and ground work therapy.

When it comes to qualifications where does physical riding therapy and hippotherapy end and equine assisted psychotherapy begin? Each one of us is unique in what we offer within EAA/T. I would suggest a curriculum needs to include further education degree level (plus possibly a Masters or MSc) that takes into account each practitioners other qualifications, depth of experience and the type of client base each individual works with or wishes to work with, for example a facility offering equine assisted psychotherapy should have a qualified psychotherapist working with the client, hippo-therapy and riding therapy should have qualified riding instructors and also a physiotherapist or nurse on the team, facilitators offering horse assisted education should have professional facilitator/coaching/mentoring training. I feel trying to tie down the subjects into two is too fixed. I believe there should be curriculum/qualifications available with various modules but which cover both riding therapy and ground work therapy, as I personally feel both riding as a therapy and ground work are both important, and that knowledge in both needs to be studied at a professional level. Also, there are so many benefits for clients (particularly challenged children and young people) to learn stable management and horse care, this then includes learning life skills, as well as reading, writing and arithmetic, within the therapeutic space horses provide.

3. High-School Education

Today, as expert EAA/T practitioners we are aware that the challenges in the classroom are growing as the emphasis on heterogeneity, special education inclusion, and an escalation in cultural diversity expands. The EAA/T model has always tried to cope

with a mixed ability classroom, where students have different levels of readiness, interest and learning profiles.

a. What proactive modifications could be made to produce quality teaching for future EAA/T practitioners/therapeutic riding instructors, based on the knowledge that there is this learner variance? *Answer: I feel different modules as mentioned above would help, I also feel very strongly that much of the learning should come from on the job training, supervised practice, work-placements, apprenticeships, volunteering… Also, teacher training, coaching, counselling training; and physiotherapy training, depending on the circumstances and the area/s the student wishes to work.*

In the first round of the Delphi Survey 53.85% of you suggested that prospective EAA/T practitioners participating in a therapeutic riding instructor diploma should have a minimum of 12 years of school education. Others, however, suggested that insisting on 12 years of school education could be restrictive as it may prevent students that are creative and practically able, but find it difficult to participate in formalised study entering the course. Equally it may restrict students who had participated in alternative methods of education.

b. How can we build a profile for prospective EAA/T practitioners, who wish to be therapeutic riding instructors that include all of the above possible students? *Answer: as above, life experience with horses and caring for people, other further education qualifications, and importantly on the job training, supervised practice, work placements, apprenticeships, volunteering. Globally there are many people doing incredible work without having completed 12- years formal education.*

4. Curriculum Building

a. Should we give future EAA/T practitioners, who are therapeutic riding instructors, the opportunity to study further and achieve the goal of being recognised as professional practitioners in their own right? *Answer: Yes*

b. Should a future curriculum be built to encourage personal growth, knowledge and development, and professionalism? *Answer: Yes, horsemanship itself should be about*

self -mastery - personal development and growth; in addition, it is the norm in any other therapeutic profession.

c. It is possible to expand an EAA/T curriculum to contain both an EAA/T diploma and a university degree that would provide practitioners the scope needed to not only advance in the field, but also persuade national governments to recognise EAA/T as a profession. *Answer: Yes, very much so, see what I wrote earlier.*

d. What are the elements of an expanded spiral curriculum that could engender ongoing knowledge, professional growth and job satisfaction to continue a career path for an EAA/T practitioner? *Answer: I think I answered this earlier too, by designing a curriculum that has models and study that suit each individual, but also taking into account the individual's other qualifications and experience. Plus, encourage further study, other non-horse qualifications such as physiotherapy, psychology and so on.*

e. If a future EAA/T curriculum was expanded, do you feel this would increase the chance of National Governing Bodies recognising EAA/T practitioners as professionals? *Answer: YES, how might the curriculum be expanded? Create a global degree system, chance to do a masters or MSc, please explain the reasons for your thinking. To be a respected professional body we need to study, do research. By doing so we will become more recognised as professionals and able to share information and research more widely in academia.*

5. Teacher Education for EAA/T Curriculum Teachers/Educators

It was suggested in the first round of the Delphi survey that teachers/educators need a high level of knowledge to teach, but also need to know how to take care of their students' needs.

a. How could a future curriculum equip teachers with skills to provide knowledge, acceptable attitudes, and behaviors that are required to perform tasks effectively in the classroom and in the field? *Answer: Holistic (*both in the field and in the classroom) teacher training. Ongoing supervised practice, courses, sharing information, professional research and training opportunities. Mentoring and coaching training.*

b. Please describe the reasons for your opinions and why you are thinking this way. *Answer: We are in an emerging field and we need to keep learning and keep sharing in order to be the best we can possibly be.*

6. Mentoring and Coaching

In round one, responders suggested that there is a need for experienced and expert mentors and coaches to offer advice and guidance to student EAA/T practitioners/therapeutic riding instructors as they proceeded through the supervised practice to achieve the goal of becoming a graduate EAA/T practitioner/ therapeutic riding instructor.

What do you feel is the best training method for Mentors and Coaches? What are your reasons for these opinions? *Answer! I have been on a personal journey over the last 5 years trying to work this out! There are numerous courses available I am studying with the goal of ending up with professional mentoring, coaching, facilitator and counselling qualifications, which include gestalt, systems theory and mindfulness training. This is in order to work with individuals and groups both in horse assisted education/ equine facilitated learning (including mentoring and coaching) and as a riding therapist, but most of the mentoring and coaching training I am doing is non-horse specific. There are various equine specific trainings available but they are at large very expensive and mainly in America (I am in the UK). I have the horse skills so this is working well for me. I do however want to also study with some of the pioneers in equine assisted learning and coaching in America and am putting a portfolio together in the hope I may get funding to do so!*

How might Mentors and Coaches be trained to cope with the multifaceted needs of prospective EAA/T practitioners who may come into the course with a different knowledge base and experience*? Answer: Please see my answer above. Over my 5-year journey I feel like I have ended up designing my own curriculum, which has emerged as I go along. I am very happy to share in full the route I am taking.*

How many years of experience are needed before one applies to become a mentor? *Answer: At least 10 years working in a proven professional capacity. I had over 20*

years' hands on experience mentoring and coaching both in business and as a riding instructor before entered the field of training to become a professional EAA/T practitioner/therapeutic riding instructor.

Should those years be working experience in the field and or teaching prospective EAA/T practitioners/therapeutic riding instructors? Yes, both. Please explain the reasons for your opinion. *Answer: It needs to be both, including the grounding in horses' knowledge already expressed earlier, and the ability to mentor, coach, teach – and inspire. The mentor/coach needs all these skills and hands on experience in order to be fully conversant and able to cope with the complex multifaceted needs (both individually and as a collective) of prospective EAA/T practitioners and the field or fields they are working in.*

7. Supervised Practice

As an informal recap, supervised practice is an integral part of any academic degree concerned with health care, which is work done in providing primary, secondary, and tertiary care, as well as in public health. From the earliest days, supervised practice has been widely used in professional education. At first supervised practice was called various names like 'on-the-job training' or 'apprenticeship', "but once it was added to higher education it became known as 'internship' or 'practicum'. Supervised practice is where experience, theory, application skills, personality attributes, technical knowledge, human foibles, institutional resources, and politics come together". (Cooper & Saunders, 2002, p.7)

Cooper & Saunders, (2002), Learning Through Supervised Practice and Student Affairs, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group New York, p. 7.

In the first round of the Delphi Survey there was 92% consensus that supervised practice is a must for EAA/T practitioners who are going to be Therapeutic Riding Instructors. There was some debate as to how many hours were needed to ensure that supervised practice was worthwhile. In fact, there was a large deviation in the number of hours proposed, with some suggesting that quality should reign over quantity.

Can you explain in greater depth what brought you to your own decision? *Answer: It was very hard to quantify, certainly quality should reign over quantity to a certain extent and as mentioned earlier, because the field of EAA/T is still emerging without any one professional accreditation system or curriculum it is very hard to measure. What would help most would be a curriculum that can help measure? Answer: A global professional accreditation system and a degree level curriculum. Plus, masses of research!*

b. Collectively you stated that supervised practice was an essential part of any professional education. In any future curriculum how best can supervised practice be used to support prospective EAA/T practitioners who will become Therapeutic Riding Instructors? *Answer: By everyone working together and providing professional quality supervised practice, apprenticeships and on the job training which can be accredited. This would also encourage student funding etc.*

c. Where and when would you think that there is a need to participate in supervised practice: prior to the beginning of the course, and/or during the course, or following the course? Please explain the reasons for your opinions. *Answer: that would depend on which course or courses the student was undertaking. I feel the emphasis should focus on supporting students/practitioners already working in EAA/T having completed some initial training. My thinking is based on the fact that some students start training in EAA/T but then when they find it is not so glamorous or financially rewarding as they imagined – move on. So I feel it is much more sustainable to focus on those who can prove they are serious at devoting their careers in EAA/T long term.*

8. Critical thinking and Self-reflection

Some responders felt that a good EAA/T practitioner was unattainable without being a person who can critically think and self-reflect. It is those cognitive skills or strategies that increase the probability of a desirable outcome for practice.

How much emphasis should a future curriculum put on situation learning, (e.g. Problem -based learning PBL) that can encourage purposeful reasoning and goal directed thinking? (For example, problem solving, formulating inferences and calculating likelihoods, and thoughtful effective decision making that is connected to tasks and desirable outcomes). *Answer: I tend to believe if we had a curriculum that reflected the qualities needed in order to practice in EAA/T the emphasis could be reflected in the syllabus.*

b. How can a future curriculum develop a student EAA/T practitioners/ therapeutic riding instructors reflective thinking skills so that they can assess what they know, what they need to know and how to bridge that gap during learning and practical situations? *Answer: same as above; if we had a curriculum that reflected the qualities needed in order to practice in EAA/T the emphasis could be reflected in the syllabus. So then the question is what qualities are needed in order to operate professionally within the field of EAA/T. For me that would be: Ability to pay attention and be aware at all times, working from a healthy ego/non-ego, with good leadership skills and the ability to work in the best interests of the client/s and the horses, and keep the environment safe, think on one's feet and problem solve - not just cognitively but intuitively and empathically. Much of this is learnt from experience.*

c. How can a future curriculum develop a student's analytical skill, and judgment making, so that an EAA/T practitioner/ therapeutic riding instructor has the ability to actively reflect and assess any situation in the area? *Answer: The syllabus should include personal development, coaching and mentoring. In the classroom, there should be case histories of what to do in various situations as well as role playing activities.*

d. If reflective thinking is very important in prompting learning during complex problem solving situations, how and where in the curriculum should training in this skill be placed? Hands on experience, on the job training, whilst in the classroom as above role-play, case histories, training to work under pressure and in emergency situations. Please note: when it comes to reflective learning and self-development a lot of these skills can be learnt through doing the ground work equine facilitated learning – based

on experimental learning, systems thinking and complexity theory aimed at professional development for business people.

9. In-service Training

In round one of the Delphi survey some responders thought that in-service training was an acceptable approach to continued education, however one respondent did say that it was overrated.

How would a future curriculum provide an in-service training component that would be a valuable experience for EAA/T practitioners/ therapeutic riding instructors? *I feel we need a good balance of both. But that the yards providing the in-service training are capable of doing so professionally and have some form of accreditation.*

Please explain the reasons for your suggestion. Answer: We need to set professional standards.

10. National Standards Academic Quality Control

From your responses in round one, different countries have suggested that in their country they have no form of quality control or national standard for EAA/T or EAA/T curricula, while others suggested that there is a somewhat a system of quality control. However, there was an inference that this was something needed.

a. In your opinion, what would be the best way to ensure national standards and quality control for a future EAA/T curriculum? *Answer: I feel we need a new global organisation that is professional, objective, unprejudiced and wel- funded (not just run by volunteers), with a total emphasis on education and training, with academic teachers PhD level, as well as those who have spent their lives working in EAA/T. From your answer, what organization or individual professional would be best equipped to carry out quality control? Answer: I do not think one organization or individual could do this alone. The two EAA/T professionals I have learned to respect most are Anita Shkedi and Barbara Rector.*

b. If you decided on an organization, what person in the organisation would be the best to carry out the quality control*? I feel a new organization with a total focus on education and training needs to be formed, but within that all the professional bodies that exist worldwide could play a part in that. I see it as creating international standards rather than national. Which would then need to fit in with each country's national standard within university academia and other well-established academic quality control. In the UK, there are no national standards other than the RDA and BHS neither of which offer the full spectrum of EAA/T or anything like a degree level curriculum. I believe there are some agricultural colleges offering EAA/T groundwork in part within a syllabus of other degree level equine study but that is all. It does not cater for mature students. Within all this I feel strongly that within any syllabus the wellbeing of the horses and ponies both physically, mentally, emotional and as sentient beings is paramount.*

Appendix 13

Appendix 13.i: Delphi Expert Survey Round 2 Feedback

Equestrian / Horsemanship / Horse Care and Management

It should be mandatory for both the instructors and the therapists to have horse skills, and that a holistic approach should be accepted as the norm.

The level of training may need to be expanded in order to correspond to the work carried out in the arena, outside the arena, or on the trail.

Some respondents thought that there should be a required qualification for each skill: equestrian, horsemanship, horse care and management. These qualifications apply also to those who practice groundwork.

Profiling

An EAA/T diploma should require a:

- High School Diploma
- Psychological Assessment
- Natural attachment to humans and horses

Some respondents suggested that 12 years of Education or equivalent was sufficient. (In rare cases exemptions might be given after personal portfolios are examined.)

Basic Diploma Curriculum

It was suggested that a holistic approach was essential for an EAA/T practitioner to have basic teaching skills, which would ensure that the practitioner/instructor has knowledge of the client and would be able to teach the whole child in a similar fashion to a teacher in the school classroom.

Group learning that included problem -based learning, active learning, role-play, videos, is viewed as an effective format for teaching EAA/T practitioners,

Some responders thought it necessary for EAA/T practitioners to have therapeutic skills, where others suggested that they should expand their basic knowledge and practice.

Reflective practice using all possible teaching techniques, like videos etc. should be encouraged.

Additional training would be required for any kind of specialisation or teaching technique.

All EAA/T practitioners need basic teaching practice skills.

College advisors should engage and assist in the learning programme for students with special needs.

Student portfolios could be developed for each person in the course, which can continue with the person throughout their career.

Appendix 14

Appendix 14.i: Delphi Expert Survey Round 3 Questionnaire

As an EAA/T expert, please circle the number in the boxes that matches your opinion most closely. The Survey below shows the responses of one Delphi Expert (in bold font).

Topic 01 Living and Functional Anatomy and Neuro Anatomy						
1– Disagree Completely, 2- Disagree Somewhat, 3– Neither Agree or Disagree, 4- Agree Somewhat, 5- Agree Completely						
1	Functional anatomy should represent a basic topic in an EAA/T curriculum.	1	2	3	4	**5**
Topic 02 Normal Child Development						
1– Disagree Completely, 2- Disagree Somewhat, 3– Neither Agree or Disagree, 4- Agree Somewhat, 5- Agree Completely						
2	Prospective EAA/T graduates need a basic knowledge of normal child development.	1	2	3	4	**5**
Topic 03 Sensory Motor Development						
1– Disagree Completely, 2- Disagree Somewhat, 3– Neither Agree or Disagree, 4- Agree Somewhat, 5- Agree Completely						
3	Prospective EAA/T graduates must have an understanding of human sensory motor development.	1	2	3	4	**5**
Topic 04 Child Developmental Psychology						
1– Disagree Completely, 2- Disagree Somewhat, 3– Neither Agree or Disagree, 4- Agree Somewhat, 5- Agree Completely						
4	EAA/T graduates should have an understanding of psychological changes that can occur in the course of a child's life.	1	2	3	**4**	5
5	It is important for prospective EAA/T graduates to have the opportunity to study different ways humans create knowledge.	1	2	3	**4**	5
Topic 05 Cognitive Child Psychology						
1– Disagree Completely, 2- Disagree Somewhat, 3– Neither Agree or Disagree, 4- Agree Somewhat, 5- Agree Completely						

6	It is important for prospective EAA/T graduates to study how people acquire, process and store information.	1	2	3	4	**5**
7	It is important for prospective EAA/T graduates to understand how people think, perceive, remember, and learn.	1	2	3	4	**5**
Topic 06 Physical and Psychological Pathologies						
1– Disagree Completely, 2- Disagree Somewhat, 3– Neither Agree or Disagree, 4- Agree Somewhat, 5- Agree Completely						
8	It is important for prospective EAA/T graduates to have a sound knowledge of various disabilities known as physical and psychological pathologies.	1	2	3	4	**5**
9	Knowledge of pathologies has a significant impact upon the practical experience.	1	2	3	**4**	5
Topic 07 Manifestations						
1– Disagree Completely, 2- Disagree Somewhat, 3– Neither Agree or Disagree, 4- Agree Somewhat, 5- Agree Completely						
10	Prospective EAA/T graduates require a basic knowledge of the manifestations of various diseases.	1	2	3	4	**5**
11	Knowing manifestations will have a significant impact upon the practical experience.	1	2	3	4	**5**
Topic 08 Principles and Practices of Equine Assisted Activities Therapy						
1– Disagree Completely, 2- Disagree Somewhat, 3– Neither Agree or Disagree, 4- Agree Somewhat, 5- Agree Completely						
12	Prospective EAA/T graduates must have theoretical understanding of Equine Assisted Activities/Therapy EAA/T- (Principals of Practice).	1	2	3	4	**5**
13	It is important to teach prospective EAA/T graduates how to engage with clients, families, medical insurances, and others 'employers' and 'stakeholders' (family doctor, psychologist).	1	2	3	**4**	5
14	The curriculum must support the prospective EAA/T graduate by providing the highest standards of security for students, client and the horse.	1	2	3	4	**5**
15	It is important for EAA/T practitioners to know how to choose and take care of the therapeutic riding horse.	1	2	3	4	**5**
16	It is important for the prospective EAA/T practitioner to know how to work with the unique properties of the horse in order to meet the client's needs.	1	2	3	4	**5**

Topic 09 Theoretical Skills						
1– Disagree Completely, 2- Disagree Somewhat, 3– Neither Agree or Disagree, 4- Agree Somewhat, 5- Agree Completely						
17	It is necessary to use training techniques that build the critical thinking skills of prospective EAA/T graduates.	1	2	3	4	**5**
18	It is necessary to use active learning (AL) techniques that build reflective skills of prospective EAA/T graduates.	1	2	3	4	**5**
19	Learning about problem -based learning (PBL), as a method to learn to solve problems while reflecting upon personal experiences, should be a part of the EAA/T practitioner curriculum.	1	2	3	4	**5**
20	Prospective EAA/T graduates should be taught teaching and coaching skills.	1	2	3	4	**5**
Topic 010 Educator Skills						
1– Disagree Completely, 2- Disagree Somewhat, 3– Neither Agree or Disagree, 4- Agree Somewhat, 5- Agree Completely						
21	It is necessary to improve the training of EAA/T educators in order to close the gap between theoretical knowledge and practice.	1	2	3	4	**5**
22	Educators must be able to teach prospective EAA/T graduates how to translate/ connect what is taught in the classroom to the practical experience.	1	2	3	4	**5**
23	The teacher of prospective EAA/T graduates must acquire knowledge skills and an attitude that can positively affect a prospective EAA/T graduate who must cope with the realities that can occur during EAA/T practice and eventual work experience.	1	2	3	4	**5**
24	Any educator of prospective EAA/T graduate must have knowledge of teaching adult learners.	1	2	3	4	**5**
Topic 011 Practicum						
1– Disagree Completely, 2- Disagree Somewhat, 3– Neither Agree or Disagree, 4- Agree Somewhat, 5- Agree Completely						
25	Student EAA/T practitioners/instructors must receive authentic practical experience.	1	2	3	4	**5**
26	Prospective EAA/T graduates must receive a genuine supervised practicum at all times.	1	2	3	**4**	5

Topic 012 Practical Skills						
1– Disagree Completely, 2- Disagree Somewhat, 3– Neither Agree or Disagree, 4- Agree Somewhat, 5- Agree Completely						
27	Practical experience is the primary site of learning for the workplace.	1	2	3	4	**5**
28	The EAA/T practitioner's curriculum needs emphasis on the practical experience that is over and above the theory.	1	2	3	4	**5**
Topic 013 Supervised Practice						
1– Disagree Completely, 2- Disagree Somewhat, 3– Neither Agree or Disagree, 4- Agree Somewhat, 5- Agree Completely						
29	Prospective EAA/T practitioners must receive supervised practice only from trained supervisors/mentors/coaches.	1	2	3	4	**5**
30	Supervisors must receive specialised training and have extended experience before they can take up the role of prospective EAA/T graduate supervisor.	1	2	3	4	**5**
31	Supervised practice should include applied knowledge, practical and technical skills, social and interpersonal skills, professional ethics, attitudes and values, as well as developing life skills.	1	2	3	4	**5**
Topic 014 Equestrian Skills						
1– Disagree Completely, 2- Disagree Somewhat, 3– Neither Agree or Disagree, 4- Agree Somewhat, 5- Agree Completely						
32	Graduate EAA/T practitioners must have either full time professional experience or the equivalent of three years' practical experience working with horses. (Professional experience can include instructor diplomas in Western, English, Racing (Jockey), Vaulting, Centered Riding, and Jumping/Cross Country)	1	2	3	4	**5**
33	An EAA/T practitioner must possess skills in assessing and handling horses on the ground for positive behaviour, soundness, safety for groundwork and riding therapy.	1	2	3	4	**5**
34	All prospective EAA/T graduates should have knowledge of the horse and horse care and management skills before participating in the course.	1	2	3	4	**5**
35	All EAA/T practitioners, whether instructor, coach, therapist and/or mental health care workers, must have good grounding in horsemanship.	1	2	3	4	**5**

Topic 013 A Future Expanded Curriculum						
1– Disagree Completely, 2- Disagree Somewhat, 3– Neither Agree or Disagree, 4- Agree Somewhat, 5- Agree Completely						
36	A future EAA/T curriculum should aim to be more student-centered rather teacher-centered.	1	2	3	**4**	5
37	An expanded EAA/T curriculum should give future EAA/T practitioners the opportunity for further professional development.	1	2	3	4	**5**
38	An expanded spiral curriculum can be designed to include individuals with other qualifications and experience.	1	2	3	**4**	5
39	An expanded spiral curriculum could include specialisation in non- horse qualifications, like physiotherapy special education.	1	2	3	**4**	5
40	EAA/T is a unique discipline and should be a self-mastery profession in itself.	1	2	3	4	**5**
41	An expanded curriculum could encourage a career path for EAA/T practitioners that include a degree system, with an opportunity for a Master's Degree and Doctorate.	1	2	3	4	**5**
42	An expanded curriculum will make it easier for EAA/T practitioners to be recognised and respected as professionals, and share information as well as academic research.	1	2	3	4	**5**
43	Any future curriculum should include a scheme for in-service training for graduate EAA/T practitioners.	1	2	3	4	**5**

Appendix 15

Appendix 15.i: Delphi Expert Survey Round 3 Feedbacks

The key findings from the Delphi Survey Round 3 are the following:

Professional Validation and Personal Development

95.3% consensus that there are gaps in the curriculum that prevented professional validation and personal development. There is a general consensus that in order to change this situation the curriculum should be professionalised to include the possibility of an academic degree and in the future the opportunity to specialise.

Integration and Inclusion

93.3% consensus that theoretical knowledge must be linked to authentic practice. There is a real desire to build a new in-service training programme that should be considered an extension of the curriculum.

Principles of Practice

95.5% consensus that experiential training and supervised practice as an important piece of the curriculum and should be on a par with theory. There is a powerful lobby for more teacher education and the opportunity to teach teachers how to teach adults. There is a desire to shift teaching and learning from being teacher-centred to student-centred.

Incorporation of Theoretical Skills

94.3% consensus that problem-based learning (PBL) and active learning (AL) are worthwhile teaching paradigms to encourage students to learn about pathologies and manifestations of client issues through an experience of problem solving. Participants are aware that PBL and AL are reflective learning techniques that helped students reflect upon their practice. They suggested that these techniques develop flexible knowledge through self-directed learning, effective collaboration and intrinsic motivation.

Adoption Process- Validation

94.3% consensus that a stabilisation process is necessary to secure standards and national recognition for EAA/T as a profession in its own right. Participants are keen to provide opportunities for EAA/T practitioners to be trained in how to conduct research.

Acquisition of Knowledge

a. Equestrian Qualifications

94.25% consensus that EAA/T practitioners needed expertise in all equestrian skills, which was regarded as a most significant qualification. There is 100% agreement that practitioners must have skills to build human/horse connections.

b. Academic Knowledge (Pathologies & Manifestations)

93.5% consensus that academic knowledge of pathologies and manifestations is an essential part of any EAA/T curriculum. Without knowledge of pathological manifestations practitioners are unable to match horse techniques to a client's limitations and underlying cause of their issues.

Thank you very much for participating in this survey.

Appendix 16

Appendix 16.i: Authentic Practice - Reality is the Curriculum

Theoretical Knowledge Sample: Equine Therapy Intervention

Intake Information

Client # Young adult male

Age: 24 years

Diagnosis: Cerebral and Central Nervous System (CNS) Vasculitis, affecting areas of the Prefrontal Cortex and Lumber spine.

Treated with Chemotherapy for six months

Suffered from grand mal epilepsy since the age of 12, controlled by medication.

Manifestations: Deficit in executive functions, perception and planning problems, hemiparesis with spasticity in both legs, foot drop and clonus, lacks urinary control

Unable to walk without support, wheelchair bound, easily becomes tired, socially becoming isolated,

Prior to the cerebral vasculitis, client was a healthy male, enjoying sport, and academic studies.

Knowledge of Linking Theory to Practice

Requirements for Authentic Practice Session:

Practitioner knowledge: client, challenges and manifestations

Practitioner skills: Equestrian knowledge horsemanship skills, therapeutic skills, the ability to connect manifestations to equine therapy to improve a client's functional ability and quality of life.

Planning skills: Long-term goals, session objectives

Session Content: Mounting / dismounting, warm up/ skill/ cool down/or an activity to include learning from the warm up and skill

Evaluation: Session feedback, written summary

Management skills: Volunteer job descriptions and management, e.g. leading the horse and / or walking beside the rider for safety

Session Plan	Mounting	Warm Up	Skill	Cool down/Activity	Dismount	Observation Evaluation & Written summary
Week 1 Session Time ½ hour	Wheel chair mount requiring 5 persons Kept rider's feet out of stirrups until spasm is reduced during ride.	Breathing exercises Trying to sit upright.	Using leaders and volunteers Rider sat on a moving horse. Held the horn of the western saddle, lost balance when trying to take the hand of the saddle.	For relaxation encouraged talking while sitting on a moving horse.	From the horse to the wheelchair supported by 3 persons.	Poor balance & coordination curve in back, unable to sit up with good posture Extremely difficult for the rider to lift his body from the saddle. Poor use of right leg. Clonus in right foot- foot drop Low self-esteem in new situation.

Session Plan	Mounting	Warm Up	Skill	Cool down/Activity	Dismount	Observation Evaluation & Written summary
Week 2 Session Time ½ hour	5 persons needed for mounting. Rider able to control the drop down onto the horses back. B kept his feet out of stirrups until spasm reduced during ride.	Breathing and posture exercises Taught to move the horse forward using the voice.	Using leaders and volunteers, the rider was able to feel the three-dimensional horse movement Stood up using the stirrups to ease pressure on horses back. Holding horn of the saddle for support.	Walking and talking, relaxation during the cool down.	From the horse to the wheel chair Supported by 3 persons.	Still poor posture, unable to sit upright for more than a few seconds. However, standing above the horses back improved and the exercise was carried out more easily at the end of the session than the beginning. No clonus. To remember Riders with muscle tone control weight 10% heavier than a rider that does have that control.

Week 3 Session time ½ hour	3 persons only for mounting. Kept feet out of stirrups until spasm reduced during ride.	Breathing exercises Worked on good posture and centring his body, (Body control and awareness) Continued using voice to move horse forward.	Took hand away from horn on the saddle and held reins during the ride. B said he felt movement of the horse. Started to use his calf muscles in an attempt to make the horse move forward. Attempted to perform slalom. Stood in the stirrups to ease pressure on horse. B use legs, lifted toes in the shoes, which lowered the left heel. Unable to lower right heel. Started learning to ride a circle. To the right was fairly good, however, to the left lost perception, location balance and centring. Also, lost use of the rein and left right control. To motivate took a few steps of trot. Rider was	Session finished with rider guiding the horse around the arena using the reins. During this time the horse was released from the lead rope and the leader, however, the leader and I continued to walk beside the horse.	Dismounted and asked to walk some steps to his wheel chair giving a correct step.	Balance has improved rider had good posture for 20 meters of the arena. Using his calf muscles the rider used muscle control, and cognition to move the horse forward. Trot was used. B lost control of the reins while he was trotting to the left. To continue working on cognition planning, perception, executive functions when the rider. Continue improving the execution of a circle and slalom in the arena.

Session Plan	Mounting	Warm Up	Skill	Cool down/Activity	Dismount	Observation Evaluation & Written summary
			able to sit to a smooth trot slow trot. of us at his side.			

Week 4 Session Time 45 minutes	3 persons only Kept feet out of stirrups until spasm reduced during ride.	Breathing exercises during walk, Put feet in stirrups. The weak right leg and foot has little movement in the stirrup irons. Foot exercises are carried out to ease this situation. Used the warm up for the walking part of the session Walked very well during the exercise part of the session. Holding the reins all the time. Practiced starting and stopping. Bracing the riders back, and closing the fingers around the reins, the rider was able to stop the horse. Using voice and some pelvic movement and leg to move horse forward.	Began rising trot- rider B was perfectly in time with the movement. Strong movement from the horse's body and hind legs made it possible for B to be pushed up in the trot. Worked in walk on a triangle shape in the arena, B had to perform the task in both directions. During the task B planned ahead, by using his eyes he looked in the direction he needed to go. He performed the exercise in both walk and trot. Then he walked between cones looking towards the left.	Cool down has become an activity that includes both the first and second part of the ride. Using the triangle, the rider had to ride, with good posture and stop at all three points of the triangle. Then trot on the straight lines between the cones of the triangle.	After the ride the rider asked to put on the leg brace to practice walking 5-10 steps to his wheelchair.	B improved his accuracy and visual perception especially when he was looking towards the right. The rising trot was amazing, in time, with good posture, balance and control. Extremely empowering for him. The degree of difficulty has gone up in the sessions. The rider more confident and motivated as his ability improves. Raising self-esteem and motivation.
Week 5	3 persons only	Once mounted B was able to ride the horse at a	B walked around the arena doing most of the	During the cool down the rider performed a	Dismount is easier; B found he could	Mounted the horse quite stiffly today,

Session Plan	Mounting	Warm Up	Skill	Cool down/Activity	Dismount	Observation Evaluation & Written summary
Session Time 45 minutes	Was waiting on the mounting block standing, while waiting to mount the horse. Lifted his leg over the horses back with ease. Put feet in the stirrups, as there was very little spasm.	good walking pace, holding the reins practicing breathing, and finding the three-dimensional movement of the horse. Using his voice and body movement he encouraged the horse to walk forward.	work himself. When changing the direction, he practiced sitting in the centre of his saddle with good posture. Using some pressure from the weaker leg B was able to get the horse to move forward. During the ride, he performed a circle to the left and sometimes inside and outside the cones. He practiced rising trot and was able to move the horse forward more easily. B rode to the gate without a lead rope, but still volunteers and self were always at the horse's side.	circle visually laid out with cones. Riding unclipped from the lead rope the rider with only one volunteer at the horse's side B performed the skill of riding a circle in both directions, inside and outside of the circle. The ride finished by riding to the gate, stopping inform of the gate, bracing he back and then asking the horse to move forward and out of the gate.	lift his own leg over in front of the saddle and helps control the slide down for the horse by holding the horn on the saddle. The rider then walked 10 steps to his wheelchair.	needed to exercises to mobilise both legs. The left side was more difficult however, he was able to improve his balance while trotting. After the lesson B stood next to the gazebo, showing that he could stand on one leg, which he had not done before. He walked more easily to his wheelchair.

Week 6 Session Time 1 hr.	3 people for mounting. B mounted the horse quite stiffly today. He was unable to put his feet in the stirrups until he had warmed up.	The warm up mobilised B's hips, and reduced spasm in his legs. Improving his posture, balance and coordination. He was taught to move his arms forward in time with the movement of the horse's head and neck and general walking movement. To reduce spasm and increase mobility the session began with breathing exercises -pelvic exercises-lifting exercises. B was able then able to stand in the stirrups with his left heel down and his left foot much more flexible. The standing has become a relaxation activity. Practicing hand and arm exercises that asked for	Using a rectangular shaped arena B walk around the arena keeping the horse close to the fencing. Trotting, he performed excellent transitions in rising trot, and got the correct diagonal, which was better to the right than left. B carried his hands in front of him practicing putting his hands forward and then to the left and right without dropping. When asked to use his seat bone on corners his arms did drop.	B's cool down activity Was to control the horse in walk around the arena. After an excellent trot, he was asked to relax and ride with a loose rein.	Dismount continues to be easier; B has learned how to lift his own leg over in front of the saddle and helps control the slide down for the horse by holding the horn on the saddle. The rider then walked 20 steps to his wheelchair.	B continues to make improvement. Everything is easier for him to the right rather than left as this is his weak side. When the weak side is on the outside of the arena ride, he falls towards that direction.

Session Plan	Mounting	Warm Up	Skill	Cool down/Activity	Dismount	Observation Evaluation & Written summary
		stretching, extension, and flexion rotation. Using voice and body movement encouraged the horse to walk forward.				

Session Plan	Mounting	Warm Up	Skill	Cool down/Activity	Dismount	Observation Evaluation & Written summary
Week 7 Session Time 1hr.	Mounting with support of one person, but still need someone to receive his leg on the offside, and someone to control the horse.	Began warm up using breathing exercises, posture training, balance and coordination. Worked on relaxing shoulders, lifting chest, opening shoulders, growing taller. Horse walked at a good pace, helping to push the rider to improve posture. Very little spasm, legs more mobile, feet more flexible, able to lift right foot out of stirrup. Left foot more easily moved in the stirrup. Practiced starting and stopping with back in a more upright position. Used voice and body movement encouraged the horse to walk forward.	Riding session included Walking and planning ahead, to move around a defined area of the arena that was marked out with cones. Rider much more able to plan ahead, turn head in the direction needed, and not hit the cones on route. Able to plan and execute route in both directions, without mistakes. Practiced stopping at cones with body exactly opposite the cone. B trotting both rising and sitting, found both methods comfortable, and did not lose his balance.	During the final activity, B walked the horse around the arena, through the slalom and then backs to the pre-defined area. This time he was given orders what to do, to see if he could remember where to go and how carryout the assignment, which included stops. B made one mistake coming back to the designated area, forgetting the route around that area. B wanted to show his accuracy and wanted to continue practicing his stops especially if they did not line up directly with the cone.	B dismounted doing as much of the work himself. Then walked 30 steps to the wheelchair.	Executive planning and perception have improved, B motivated wanting more challenges. Balance has changed; emotional B appears to have changed. During the next session B should have more freedom within safe limits. A whip will be introduced, which he can use to support his right leg. After the session B needed to go to the toilet – the ride had stimulated his bladder.

Appendix 17

Appendix 17.i: Letter Written in 2014 from Pioneer Educator

Anita, the meeting in [redacted] is at the beginning of August: (Aug. 7th and 8th. [redacted])

I am updating the St Andrews Curriculum. I'm curious what you found for your discussion in your thesis.

My thoughts are that we are not requiring a high enough level of horse skills. So many are coming into therapeutic riding without knowing enough about horse behavior.

AND I do not think people have enough problem solving or critical thinking skills. Can't diagnose problems with the rider, horses, etc., and figure out how to fix it. My instructors are always asking me for the answers (think sign of the times in the US. that they get things handed to them and do not have to work for it). Some of that problem is not a strong enough knowledge base in equine, riding skills, how to teach, and knowledge of disabilities to facilitate obtaining solutions. BUT if they knew how to problem solve, they would know that they need to obtain more information and would go find the info (become life-long learners).

But you have had a wider view from all over the world so am curious as to your findings.

Inaugural Steering Group Meeting

19th January 2015. 9.30 -13.00

[redacted] Equine Department

AGENDA

(Times are approximate)

9.30 Meet

10.00 Introductions

10.30 Introducing the above proposal. [redacted]

10.45 Presentation by Anita Shkedi

Anita has many years of experience in this field and has recently completed her Doctorate on this very subject. Anita will provide a comprehensive outline as to what is required and perhaps how we can take this forward.

11.30 Break

11.40 Questions /discussion

Appendix 18

Appendix 18.i: Horses in Education and Therapy International Newspaper

Kern-Gödel (2014) writes an article in the Horses in Education and Therapy International Newspaper, stating that Anestis, Anestis, Zawilinski, Hopkins and Lilienfeld (2014) wrote an article in a recent publication of the journal of clinical psychology where they argued that current evidence-based research does not justify the marketing and utilisation of EAA/T or for equine-related treatments for patients with mental disorders.

HETI Newsletter

Horses in Education and Therapy International, AISBL

December 2014

"Something Good in Everything I See" [1]

by Ann Kern-Godal

A recent edition of the *Journal of Clinical Psychology* contains a paper with the disturbing title, "Equine-related Treatments for Mental Disorders Lack Empirical Support: A Systematic Review of Empirical Investigations" (http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jclp.22113). [2]

Of greater concern are the paper's conclusion that, "The current evidence base does not justify the marketing and utilization of ERT (EAP and THR) for mental disorders. Such services should not be offered to the public unless and until well-designed studies provide evidence that justify different conclusions", and its recommendation that, "in view of the current evidence base, individuals in need of mental health services avoid seeking out ERT and treatment centers avoid practicing this approach. We further urge major organizations, such as the United States armed forces and United States Department of Veterans Affairs, to hold off on the implementation of ERT (EAP and THR) programs on a wide-scale basis unless and until a strong research foundation for this treatment emerges."

What are procurers of equine assisted therapy services and the practitioners, clients, and researchers of the services to do in the face of such unequivocal statements in such a highly reputable scientific journal?

Well, first we need to take the paper seriously. It should not simply be dismissed as "irrelevant medical evidence based science," as some colleagues have suggested. Nor should it be ignored. I have yet to see a rebuttal. It is too serious, too important, and in any case our clients and patients deserve better of us than that.

Years ago, in the 1980s I was involved with some of the world's first HIV/AIDS patients in Australia. One of them taught me, in the words of the then popular Abba song, to look for "something good in everything I see." As he said, "it's not always easy but worth a try, and you'll often be surprised at what you find."

Can we find anything "good" in this paper?

Undoubtedly many will quarrel with Anestis, et al's terminology (but, has there ever been international agreement on terminology in EAT?) and their review methodology (the search was very limited). That said, the paper has much that is useful, not least of all a good check list of what many evaluators look for in our research and which funders and health insurers use for decision making. So we should make use of it also.

More importantly, and perhaps what Anestis intended, is the paper's challenge which we, in the interests of our clients, must try to meet. The challenge is to produce scientifically acceptable studies; studies aimed at finding the evidence needed to (if EAT practitioners are correct about the value of their work) convince the health service funders and insurance agencies.

To meet the challenge, we need first to identify the problem, namely, why we cannot provide the required studies. Lack of research funding and the difficulty in finding reasonably sized homogeneous populations must be high on the list of problems to be overcome.

This is where I have the greatest criticism of Anestis et al. In order to get good studies underway and

Continued on page three

- IN THIS ISSUE -

From the Director

Dear Members,

A busy and wonderful summer is past. My travels have taken me to Portugal and Brasil. In June I was in Portugal with Ann O'Shallie to teach HETI Level I Certification. We were thrilled to be in Portugal, but moreover, thrilled to be among a group of students so eager to learn. Our Certification program is but a few months old but already it is apparent that there is a great need – and a great desire – for this type of education among our member organisations.

I had no more returned from Indonesia last fall that there were new enquiries about certification training waiting for me in my email inbox, and it was the same situation when I returned from Portugal. There is no doubt for me that this is where HETI is coming into its mission. As with all programs there are bound to be growing pains. One is that we are going to need additional instructors very soon.

It was a great personal pleasure for me to attend the VI Brazilian Congress of Therapeutic Riding in Bento Gonçalves, Brasil in September. I had been asked to give a presentation for which I believed myself well prepared, but at the eleventh hour I was also asked to give a short introduction before the mayor of Bento Gonçalves and other dignitaries. I wasn't sure I could pull it off…but when I became aware of the level of excitement and interest that the participants had in therapeutic riding, my task became not a task but a pleasure.

All this is to say that HETI has a very willing audience wherever it goes. This is an exciting time to belong to this organization, as we hit our stride in our educational offerings. I am pleased to be part of it, and I am even more pleased that you, our members, as part of this wonderful journey as well.

Gisela Rhodes
Executive Director

Something Good..

Continued from page one

attract highly skilled researchers and the funding that comes with them we need larger scale populations to study. armed forces and veterans departments in the USA, UK and Australia probably offer the best opportunity there is for a large, multicentre trial. It's not easy to find "good" in injured veterans but if they feel therapeutic benefit from working with horses and are willing to become involved in research then they should not be barred from participation as Anestis et al. recommend. Rather, the Departments of Veterans Affairs in each of the countries should be pressured into funding the needed study.

Practitioners and researchers, should put aside our differences (for this project for this project at least) and agree on a protocol to be followed in all participating centres.

For my part, looking for the "good" in his paper, "I have a dream" that Professor Michael Anestis might accept a challenge and take a leading role in a major multi-center ERT (his terminology) trial.

Postscript: Since the above was written *Psychiatry Services in Advance* has published the first EAT randomized controlled study (RCT), considered to be the "gold standard" in evidenced based medicine. The results were positive as can be seen in the summary in the following link: http://ps.psychiatryonline.org/Article.aspx?ArticleID=1912427 [4]

Ann Kern-Godal *is a PhD student at the Department of Addiction Treatment, Oslo University Hospital, Norway* [3]

Footnotes

1. I have a Dream ABBA 1979 http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r82fyOb8F5w
2. Anestis MD, Anestis JC, Zawilinski LL, Hopkins TA, Lilienfeld SO. Equine-related treatments for mental disorders lack empirical support: A systematic review of empirical investigations. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*. 2014:On-line issue.
3. The author is funded by the Norwegian Research Council and the Swedish Norwegian Foundation for Equine Research.
4. Animal-Assisted Therapy With Chronic Psychiatric Inpatients: Equine-Assisted Psychotherapy and Aggressive Behavior Jeffry R. Nurenberg, M.D.; Steven J. Schleifer, M.D.; Thomas M. Shaffer, B.A.; Mary Yellin, B.S., O.T.R.; Prital J. Desai, M.D., M.P.H.; Ruchi Amin, M.D.; Axel Bouchard, M.A.; Cristina Montalvo, M.D., M.B.S. *Psychiatric Services 2014;* doi: 10.1176/appi.ps.201300524

Appendix 19

Appendix 19.i: One of the First Articles in Israel about EAA/T

Below is one of the very first newspaper article written about EAA/T in Israel (Yedioth Ahronot, June 1988)

Excerpt (translated from Hebrew to English): ...About the impact of EAA/T on the psycho-emotional realm, Dr. Snir attests, as a rehabilitation doctor specialising in Physical Medicine, at Beit Levinstein Rehabilitation Hospital. Dr. Snir studied medicine in Germany, where he became acquainted up close with EAA/T. He is familiar with the literature on the topic, which is, as he says, is mostly written in German. "EAA/T," he says, "raises self-esteem, confidence, and motivation. It is beneficial for coping and hurdling real-life challenges, and improves the sense of mobility."

Appendix 20

Appendix 20.i: Letter from Benjamin Lavi. Used with permission of Benjamin Lavi

INTRODUCING BENNY

Enclosed is a translation of an unsolicited testimony by a Cerebral Palsy sufferer, Benjamin Lavi, who tries to explain in his own way the benefits and advantages he experienced since being able to conquer horseriding.

Benjamin Lavi, who is a social worker in a home for the disabled in Netanya, wanted to write this article not only on his own behalf, but also for others who have been helped by 'Hippotherapy'.

He stresses that his new-found self-esteem and more optimistic outlook on life are as important as the marked improvement in his physical wellbeing.

Benjamin Lavi
Age: 29
Cerebral Palsy sufferer
Fulltime Social Worker for the Disabled
Netanya – Israel

9

Introduction

I write this testimony to express my own feelings and thoughts on horseriding for the disabled. I can imagine that mounting a horse is a moving experience for an ablebodied person, but when one is disabled it is an unbelievable feeling of achievement.

A Dream is Born

As a child I often fantasized about riding a horse, and when, as a young student, I saw a picture of a disabled girl on a horse, I became determined that one day I too would ride.

My Dream Comes True

The first time I met Anita she put me on a horse. This first lesson was a mixture of great joy and excitement as well as being very painful. My body was suddenly forced into new movements and positions. Under normal treatment I would have given up after a few minutes, but the strong desire to be able to ride made me persevere, for I felt prepared to suffer the pain in order to become a rider.

Riding versus Physiotherapy

I would like to make a comparison between hippotherapy and physiotherapy – not from the professional aspect, but from my own point of view as a disabled person and as a social worker in a 'home for the disabled' in Netanya.

When we talk about the disabled population we must include sufferers from C.P., PMD and spinal injuries, etc. Physiotherapy is most commonly used to preserve a given physical condition and to prevent further deterioration.

Horseriding involves exercise similar to physiotherapy, but in my own experience it gives even more beneficial results. It broadens movement ranges, helps overcome spasms, strengthens muscles and improves balance.

All this is achieved because the rider has to perform several imperative actions. In order to stay on the horse he must learn to adjust himself to the rhythm of the horse's movements and be strong enough to control it.

Not being an expert in this field I would not like to give the impression that hoseriding is a cure for all ills, but it could be a major incentive for a combined treatment for horseriding and physiotherapy.

Acquiring Control of the Horse

This is done in a manege by performing exercises that teach you the correct and proper use of both hands and feet. The main aim is to be able to direct the horse by usage of reins and legs, involving foot and calf muscles. A horse, unlike a car, has his own will and desires. In order to control it the rider must maintain a constant communication with the horse, be firm and decisive on one hand and considerate on the other. The matter is merely based on physical gestures.

A disabled person is by definition somebody who lacks the ability to make use of certain physical functions, mostly those concerning his limbs. Sometimes one needs to use accessories such as artificial limbs, calipers or wheelchairs. The inability of being able to fully control one's own body causes frustrations and inferiority complex. Horseriding gives me a new sense of achievement making the best out of my limited physical functions and allows me to re-examine my physical abilities. It has improved my own physical self image and my self confidence.

Riding in Open Fields – Scenery Perception

Riding in the open fields was one of the most exhilarating experiences I ever had – surpassing my wildest dreams. Being mostly confined to a wheelchair I am used to viewing the world from the height of the average man's waist.

Mounting a horse enabled me for the first time in my life to view everything around me from a totally different aspect. My perception was completely changed – instead of looking up to people they had to look up to me. I now feel at one with nature, and through the movement and rhythm of the horse I feel like I am actually walking.

I can now go to places which were inaccessible to me in a wheelchair. It feels just great to 'walk' through the fields and orchards, and be able to pick a tangerine or an orange for myself.

Trot

Today, after about three months of riding, I am learning to trot. For me, trotting is the closest feeling to actual running. I hope that eventually I might be able to canter and who knows – maybe even to gallop.

Clearly where there is anything further to learn, there is a challenge; and where there is a challenge – there is a curiosity; and where there is curiosity and possibilities – one wants to achieve more. I am determined to master horseriding and to make my old dream a reality.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this article to Anita and Giora (my teachers) without whose help and endless devotion I would never have been able to make my dream of riding a horse come true.

I must reiterate this this article was based only on my own personal experiences. I sincerely hope that my comments might create more awareness of the scope and possibilities in this field, and that it may encourage others to support 'horseriding for the disabled' in Israel – to help others as it has helped me.

Benjamin Lavi
January 1987

Appendix 21

Appendix 21.i: Position Paper by Israeli Society of Pediatrics on EAA/T (Synopsis)

The Israeli Society of Pediatrics

האיגוד הישראלי לרפואת ילדים

Therapeutic riding and equine assisted therapy using horses

Introduction
Due to the feeling of an exaggerated use of this intervention and lack of tools paediatricians have in this field, the Paediatricians Society has decided to state its mind through this paper.
We feel we wish to protect the paediatricians and prevent any situation where they are used as a rubber stamp for this therapy.
In addition we would like to point out the indications and contra indications of EAA/T, and that it is not altogether free of danger.

Paragraph 2 - Therapeutic riding in Israel
Although there is a TRCP committee which has built a syllabus and standards, until now this committee has not been able to make any of its conclusions mandatory.
Today, as therapeutic riding instructors are not para-medical therapists, for equine therapy they should only work side by side with para-medical practitioners.

Paragraph 3 – Evidence-based research
Up to now the efficiency of therapy has not been backed-up by sufficient evidence-based research, justifying that EAA/T improves the daily life functioning capabilities of its challenged riders.

Paragraph 4 – Contraindications
There are many contraindications to EAA/T, which doctors should be aware of

Paragraph 5 - Safety during therapy sessions
There is not a national or international governing body that overlooks safety measures and standards for EAA/T.
Farms throughout the country differ in their safety requirement, and the number of accidents recorded in unknown.

Conclusions
We do NOT deny the fact that many children feel good on top of a horse, and they can learn many skills through EAA/T, which can be an addition to other therapies. However, there is always a potential for an accident.

Invitation for therapy
Children with CP and neuro-motor dysfunctions, such as DCD, can come to EAA/T. However, they can only participate in a program if there is special equipment used and para-medics present or giving the therapy. Most children must be over 6 years old, but all children with CP and severe neuro-motor dysfunction can come at an earlier age.

Not to come to therapy
ADHD, as the only proven therapy is medication and parental guidance.
Children with emotional disorders, unless the EAA/T practitioner is a psychotherapist or psychologist, NOT with therapeutic riding instructors.
Children with Autism, as the Ministry of Health accepts no indication for EAA/T.

Appendix 21.ii: Ido Efrati Article for Ha'aretz Newspaper, 2013

Israeli pediatricians question benefits of therapeutic horseback riding

With popularity of therapeutic horseback riding on the rise in Israel, a panel of pediatricians has warned that many instructors aren't properly trained and that there is scant scientific proof of its medical benefits.

The panel of the Israel Pediatrics Association, established in light of the growing number of parents requesting the treatment, included pediatricians specialising in neurology, physiotherapy and child development.

The panel, headed by Dr. Yehuda Sanetzky of the Schneider Children's Medical Center, examined medical literature of the past two decades, and concluded that "there are dozens of studies, but only a handful can be properly analyzed... No serious studies prove an improvement in daily life."

It said that the most significant findings dealt with improvement in balance and posture, mostly among children suffering from cerebral palsy. "As to functional improvement in case of autism, attention deficit disorders, coordination disorders and emotional difficulties, most of the evidence is in the form of before-and-after questionnaires, without control groups, and did not cover a substantial number of participants. Questionnaires dealing with subjective experiences will always be biased, since it is a well known fact that most human beings enjoy riding and the relationship with the horse."

The panel noted that the U.S. Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship has issued concrete instructions as to cases, which should not be treated by riding, including medical or behavioral conditions that might add to the risk of injuries. These include cases of joint dislocations, spine damage, deficient head control and several disorders that might lead to lapses of consciousness, violent behavior or disorientation. A committee authorised to regulate the field of therapeutic riding in Israel, established in 2008, determined directives for operation of therapeutic riding centres, including a minimal, obligatory syllabus. But, as the panel wrote, "at present, the committee's conclusions remain merely recommendations and are not effectively implemented in centres and instructors' classes. The committee is in touch with the Health Ministry and the Sport Authority at the Education and Sports Ministry in order to promote binding legislation." Therefore, the panel noted, while instructors are accompanied by physiotherapists, occupational therapists, psychologists and social workers at some centres, most of the personnel in the centres are riding instructors who have completed extra training, mostly insufficient. "These instructors are well trained to ensure the rider's safety, but are not para-medical therapists... a therapeutic riding instructor is not a member of the medical profession." The panel's report included recommendations and conclusions: "There can be no doubt that most children, whether healthy or suffering from disorders, feel overjoyed on the back of a horse, and at a proper, mature, age might acquire self-control, coordination, organisation, abilities required for teamwork, and so forth. Our recommendations do not deny these facts. Therefore, therapeutic riding can be a supplement, an extra form of assisting experience, as part of professional treatment programs, such as parental guidance, mental help or any other para-medical treatment, but cannot replace it. On the other hand, one must note that in contrast to other forms of

treatment, riding has an added risk of accidents. Any person, with or without disorders, can independently turn to therapeutic riding."

http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/.premium-1.564844

Appendix 22

To disseminate the research findings, I as the researcher have participated in some noteworthy dissemination activities.

Appendix 22.i: Letter from Organiser of Special Interest Group Event at Southampton University UK.

Independent Occupational Therapy Services

HCPC Registered. Member BAOT.

BAREFOOT RECOVERY

info@barefootrecovery.co.uk /07770 838 472

Mrs. A. Shkedi

P.O.Box 591

Ha Hatzav 22

Telmond 4600

Israel.

Dear Mrs. Shkedi,

I am writing on behalf of all our Special Interest Group to thank you once again for your presentation on the 26th. I am taking the liberty of copying an extract from a report that was written to summarise the meeting.

Equine Assisted Activities and Therapy, EAAT/ Occupational Therapists (OT) Special Interest Group Report

On the 26th September, 2015 a group of sixteen OT's and two Physiotherapists met at Southampton University to discuss the prospect of establishing an OT focussed EAAT Special Interest Group. A number of OT's had been discussing this subject for several years, but without any clear direction or focus.

The group were privileged in having Anita Shkedi from the Israel National Therapeutic Riding Association deliver her Doctorate findings. It was immediately clear to everyone that this could provide a well-researched and documented foundation from which to work.

Group discussions identified that priority concerns were in the key areas of setting professional standards, governance and training from the outset for any future Special Interest Group. It was decided that training required both knowledge and experience in working as a health professional and that a Post Graduate level of training would sit well with these criteria. Through the extensive and rigorous evidence that Anita Shkedi's work provides, it was concluded that any curriculum considered should adopt this work as a foundational framework. Equally so, the Spiral of Learning suggested by the work was recognised as a good fit with a Post Graduate level of training. Further to this, the practical application of theory was recognised as complimenting the OT process when applied to OT practice.

Once again, many thanks.

Yours Faithfully,

Gillian Taylor. BSc (Hons.) Occupational Therapy

Appendix 22.ii: Letter from the HETI the World Congress for Horses in Education International

Dear Anita Shkedi,

Thank you for your Abstract Submission and deepest interest in HETI 2015.
Your abstract entitled "**What is the most effective professional development approach for Equine Assisted Activities and or Therapy (EAA/T) to ensure optimal validated learning curricula?** ☐ …has been successfully received.
Your abstract reference number is: **68**.

Please refer to this abstract number in all correspondence regarding the abstract.
On March 2, 2015, all notifications of acceptance will be sent to authors.
If you have not heard of your acceptance by this date, please email the Secretariat at **support@heti2015.org**.

Best Regards,

HETI 2015

Appendix 22.iii: Abstract

Equine Assisted Activities and or Therapy (EAA/T): The Most Effective Professional Development Approach to Ensure Optimal Validated Learning Curricula

Equine Assisted Activities and Therapy (EAA/T) is a non-invasive treatment modality recommended by the medical and educational community for a subset of challenged children and adults. In Israel and globally as its popularity increases, so too are the concerns among stakeholders and the medical and educational professions about its legitimacy as a treatment modality: EAA/T practitioners have not acquired professional skills and the treatment is still not evidence-based.

To identify the possible causes of these concerns a qualitative naturalistic longitudinal research study was conducted in Israel to investigate current EAA/T curricula. The central theme focused on identifying the most effective professional training for Equine Assisted Activities and or Therapy (EAA/T) practitioners to ensure optimal learning curricula and more practical experience. Until now Experts in the field have discussed standards and training syllabi, rules and regulations. This is the first time in the filed so many stakeholders had contributed through Focus Groups, Interviews, and Questionnaires, along with empirical data to provide strong evidence that there are multiple gaps many different areas of the curriculum.

Using an extensive multi-method of research, the study identified gaps in EAA/T curricula with a review of empirical data synthesising global information from EAA/T curricula comparing past and current provisions to potential provisions. It analysed the potency of several curriculum models to find the best approach for optimal integration of teaching and learning resources for Israeli curricula. During the research process gaps were found that prevented prospective EAA/T practitioners from having opportunities to learn best practices.

It then applied the Delphi Method (DM), a robust, qualitative, naturalistic, systematic and interactive forecasting method to support the empirical research. Part of the DM required

an analysis of data, adaptation of issues and amendments to questions culminating in a collective consensus from EAA/T experts.

The Delphi Method revealed key issues that suggested the subject matter is accurate but insufficient and that there are significant gaps in curricula and educator expertise resulting in poor knowledge acquisition, a lack of experiential learning, insufficient knowledge of equestrianism and an inability to use pedagogic paradigms. Other findings include curricula is not built as a process but is rather transmitted and does not motivate active learning, medical and educational theory cannot be scientifically applied to the practice of EAA/T and that national organisations and academies sidestep high standards and core values for the sake of membership and financial gain.

This rigorous research provides recommendations for a future curriculum, which might set new quality and performance benchmarks and provide EAA/T practitioners with adequate tools to connect best practices to people with real-life challenges.

Appendix 22.iv: Letter from PATH Intl Executive Director of Therapeutic Riding Centre and its Past President

Dear Anita,

I am writing to thank you for the work that you have done in the field of EAAT. I also wanted to let you know that your work has encouraged additional exploration in the US.

PATH International has initiated a Job Analysis Task Force that will look at the competencies and expectations of the PATH Intl. Registered Level therapeutic riding instructors. We will be reaching out to you for any information that you may be willing to share.

Thank you in advance for your help and for all your contributions to our field worldwide!

Best,

Kitty

Kitty Stalsburg

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