



Practice Teaching the Distance Learner

ANGELA HART



Bachelor of Arts with Honours [B A (Hons)] Social Work by Distance Learning

Course Structure

Student Distance Learning Experience

Advantages

- ▶ **Work based**
- ▶ **Flexibility**
- ▶ **Transference of knowledge and skills to own practice**
- ▶ **Tutor Support –combination of face to face tutorials, email, telephone calls, Moodle, Vscene, Skype**
- ▶ **Tutor breadth of work experience with a range of service user groups**
- ▶ **Child friendly**
- ▶ **Range of assessment processes**

Challenges

- ▶ **Learning to get the work , study and home life balance**
- ▶ **Lone study**
- ▶ **Scottish legislation and policies for those living outwith Scotland**
- ▶ **Potential financial implications when on 60 and 100 day placements**
- ▶ **Requires good level of IT skills**

Entry Requirements

- ▶ **Entry at Stage 2**
- ▶ **120 credits**
- ▶ **At least two years work experience in social care field**
- ▶ **Currently employed for 17 ½ or more hours a week**
- ▶ **Entry at Stage 3 (Advanced Entry via portfolio route)**
- ▶ **240 credits**
- ▶ **At least two years work experience in social care field**
- ▶ **Currently employed for 17 ½ or more hours a week**
- ▶ **Passed portfolio**

Modules for the Completion of the Course

Stage 2

Psychology

Sociology

Social Policy and SW Practice

Human Growth and Behaviour

Law and Legal Systems

January 60 1st Day Placement

Practice Analysis 1

Reflective Practice and Professional Development 1 (Blackboard Presentation)

Stage 3

(Stage 2 Entry or Advanced Entry)

Social Work with Older People

Social Work with Children and Families

Theory to Practice (on-line portfolio)

January 100 day 2nd Placement

Risk Analysis

Practice Analysis 2

Reflective Practice and Professional Development 2 (Poster Presentation)

Stage 4

Research Methods

Social Work in Criminal Justice

Social Work with People with Substance Problems

Social Work Practice in Mental Health and Disability

Dissertation and Research Studies

Stage 2 Entry

- ▶ **Stage 2 enables the student to develop knowledge and skills associated with social work practice. They will acquire an initial ability to demonstrate assessment and intervention skills with a range of client groups. There are three teaching blocks, a range of modules and one assessed placement during the 16 months of this Standard Entry stage.**
- ▶ **Induction teaching block week – Beginning of January**
- ▶ **Teaching block week – June**
- ▶ **Pre-placement teaching block week – Beginning of January**
- ▶ **End of January -60 day placement (January - April)-Preplacement and Mid-point attended by Tutor, Practice Teacher and Link Supervisor**

Stage 3

- ▶ For students progressing from Stage 2 or joining via Advanced Entry this stage is over a 13 month period and comprises of two teaching blocks, a range of modules and an assessed placement.
- ▶ Stage 3 enables the student to apply advanced social work skills to specific client groups. This will be demonstrated by a greater level of independent study and increasing competence in social work practice.
- ▶ Teaching block week - May
- ▶ Pre-placement teaching block week – Beginning of January
- ▶ End of January -100 day placement (January – June)- Preplacement and Mid-point attended by Tutor, Practice Teacher and Link Supervisor

Stage 4

- ▶ **Stage Four enables the student to engage in more advanced self-directed study and to acquire a critical and evaluative understanding of social work and related disciplines. They will also be developing their research skills culminating in the completion of a dissertation. This stage has two teaching blocks and a range of modules over a 15 month period.**
- ▶ **Teaching block week – June**
- ▶ **Teaching block week – January**
- ▶ **Submission September**

*******The dissertation subject often chosen due to placement experiences-useful if the Practice Teacher could discuss potential subject area at end of 100 day placement if relevant to the placement service user group experience*******

Practice Teachers Role on Placement

- ▶ **Responsible for the co-ordination of the Placement and will focus on assisting the student to develop professional practice. Takes a lead role in making the final recommendation as to the outcome of the Placement.**
- ▶ **Attend Pre-placement meeting, discuss learning opportunities**
- ▶ **Complete the Practice Learning Agreement within two weeks of start of placement**
- ▶ **Complete Health and Safety Questionnaire**
- ▶ **Organise date for midpoint meeting, record minute for meeting**
- ▶ **Observe practice x 2, weekly supervision,**
- ▶ **Gather evidence, feedback from staff, service users, Link Supervisor**
- ▶ **Complete Practice Placement Proforma.**
- ▶ **Confirm Practice Placement Report with Student and email to the Course Administrator**
- ▶ **Call meeting if student failing placement or Null and Void**

**** There is NO requirement for a written report from the Practice Teacher for the midpoint meeting******

****All documentation available electronically via Moodle ******



Practice Teaching the 100 day placement

The Stage 2 and placement experiences

- ▶ The Stage 2 start (moving to the Stage 3) will have a 60 day 1st placement experience of a Practice Teacher..and the often ‘new to the student , regular supervision”. Guidance and assessment of application of theory, concepts, models, legislation, policy, specific to a service user group would have been achieved
- ▶ The Stage 3 Advanced Entry (AE) may have a degree or a combination of qualifications to make up the 240 credits, however, they have not experienced a 60 day placement. Theirs is a portfolio route using their work practice for the evidence for the 60 day placement. They will not have completed Stage 2 modules, however will be expected to have core knowledge and understanding of the subjects studied at Stage 2
- ▶ Challenges for the Practice Teacher- First part of placement for AE, less expectations of application of level of theory to practice in the first few weeks, then gathering pace to meet the expectations of 100 day student within first 4-6 weeks and certainly before midpoint meetings

Placement Assignment Support

- ▶ **Both placements have a range of assignments to be completed and passed to move forward to next stage as these are attached to the placement.**
- ▶ **Useful if Practice Teachers can familiarise themselves with these to provide advice, guidance and support**
- ▶ **Tutors can also offer support for assignments, although for confidentiality reasons cannot discuss specific cases**
- ▶ **Weekly reflective journals and weekly supervision will assist with this support**

Practice Teachers, Link Supervisors and Tutors need to consider the following:

- ▶ **A high number of the Distant Learning students are from overseas and from a range of cultures, religions, family experiences**
- ▶ **Experiences of education may have been very different, both positive and negative- often have difficulty asking for help**
- ▶ **English is not the students first language-this often has ramifications regarding report writing**
- ▶ **All the students on the course are employed, very often as managers, have years of work experience. The transition from employee, and sometimes employer, to student, can be confusing, stressful and difficult to get used to**

Continued:

- ▶ The 60 day placement can be in the students place of work as long as their role and learning experience is substantially different, colleagues do not see or consider them as students.
- ▶ The students are not used to having time to take a step back and reflect on their practice, they can tend to launch head on onto placement and are concerned if they are not busy straight away
- ▶ The Distance Learning student may have adopted ways of working with some considered 'bad habits' or 'shortcuts' due to time restraints and lack of resources in their agency.

Feedback from Students Regarding Placements

- ▶ **Enjoy the interactive learning, Practice Teachers help to make the links with theories, concepts and models**
- ▶ **New placement experiences with a range of service user groups**
- ▶ **Advantage that Practice Teachers have a wide range of work experiences**
- ▶ **Helpful when Practice Teachers understand the requirements and provide support with placement assignments**
- ▶ **Practice Teachers and Link Supervisors not always familiar with placement documentation**
- ▶ **Study Scottish legislation and policy, on placement these are often different depending where placed**
- ▶ **Realise that they have transferrable skills**

Feedback from Distance Learning Practice Teachers

- ▶ **“The pro’s and con’s at the same time is that most long distance students are already working in the field so may have a sound knowledge base but could also have acquired bad practice”**
- ▶ **“Mature approach to studies but likely to need assistance to balance lone study, placement and work life balance”-Some students work at the weekends to provide income, extra stress on the students and the requirements of the placement such as Reflective Journals, supervision minutes, allocated pieces of reading and work**
- ▶ **“Ask for a personal profile as students are likely to be mature with a wide range of work experience, give me an idea of areas to stretch the students knowledge and provide relevant learning opportunities”**



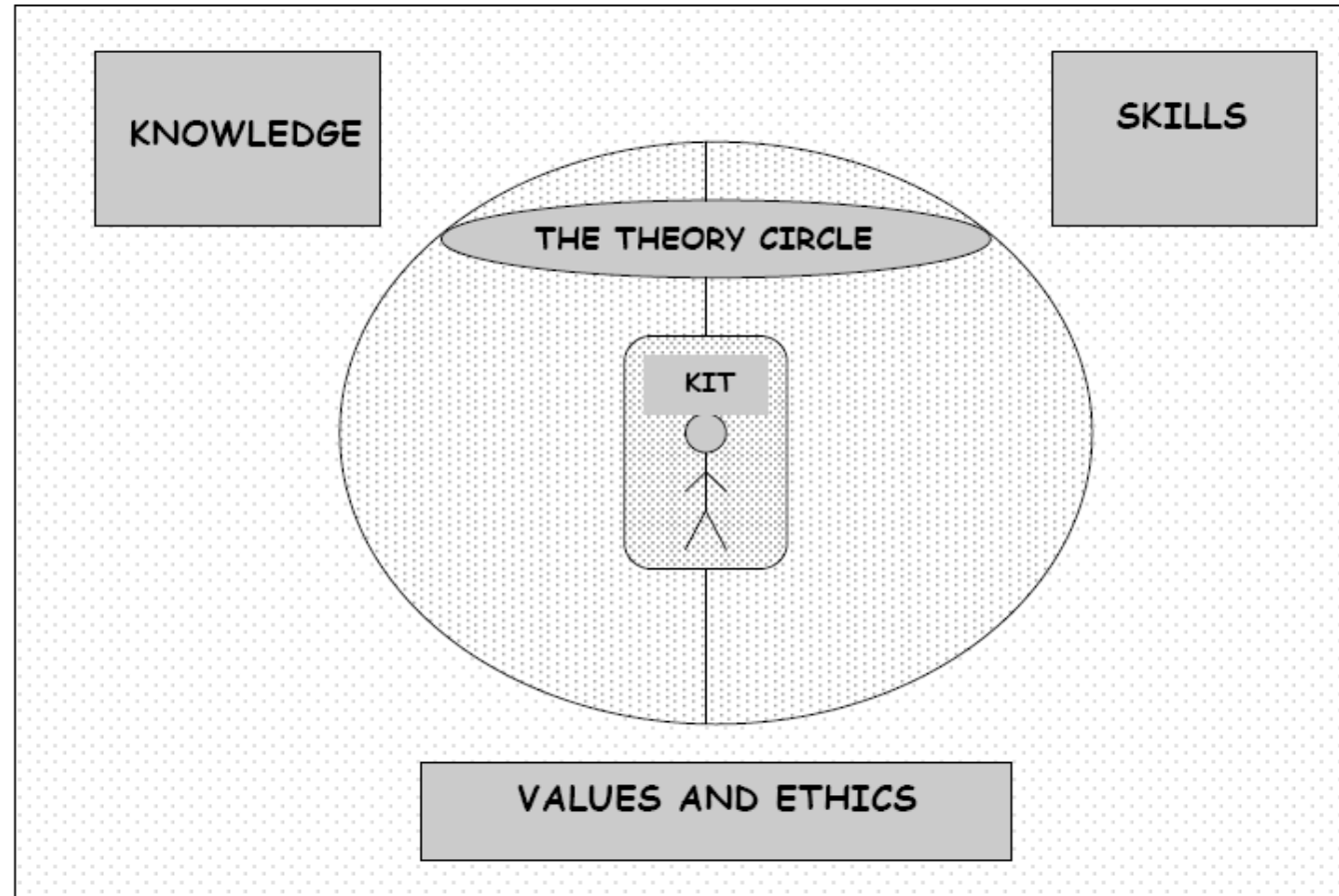
Useful, Familiar Tools for Placement



Pat Collingwood

'KIT'

THE THREE-STAGE THEORY FRAMEWORK
(COLLINGWOOD 2005)
INTEGRATING THEORY AND PRACTICE



**STAGE ONE
'KIT'**

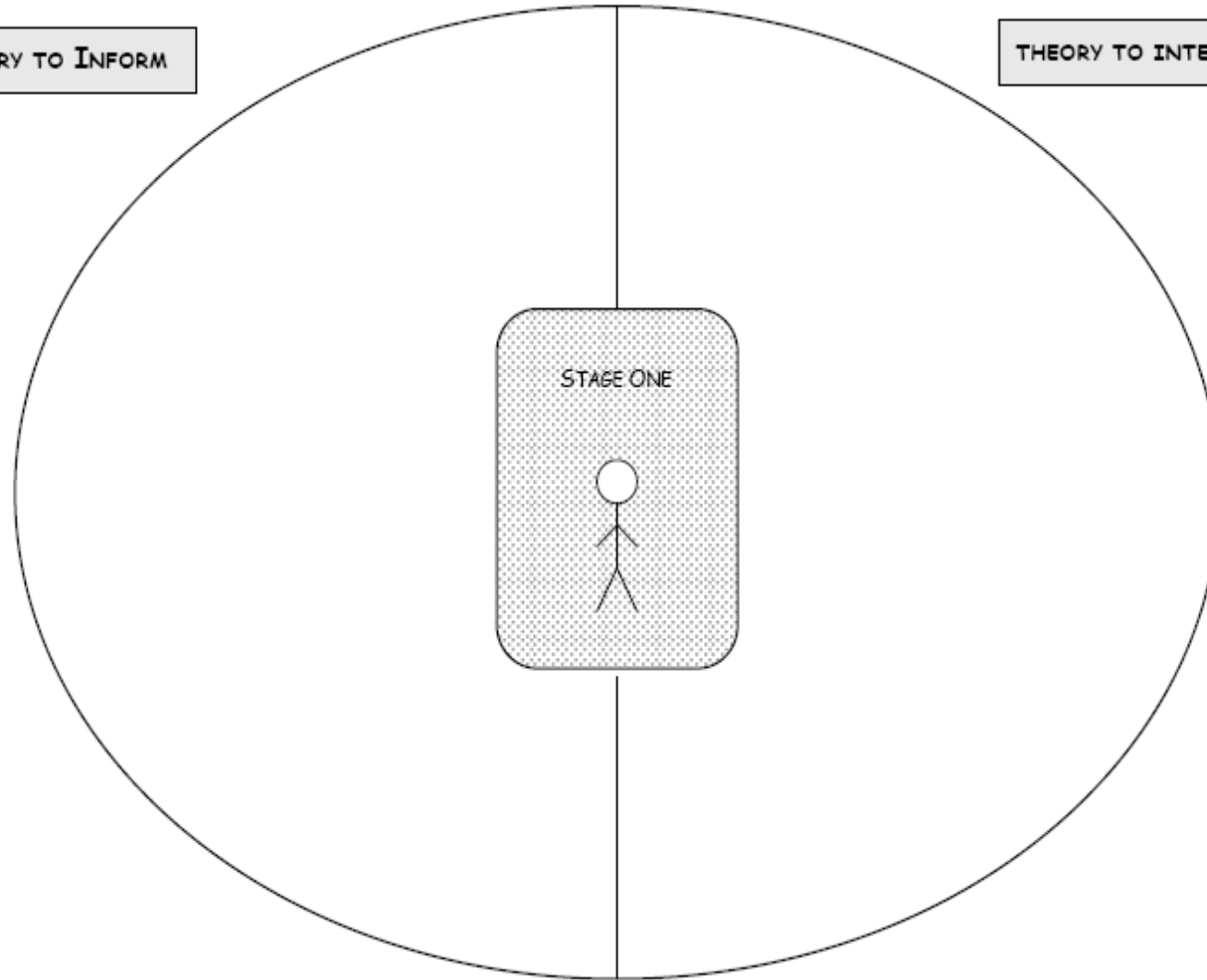


Referral:
Agency Setting:

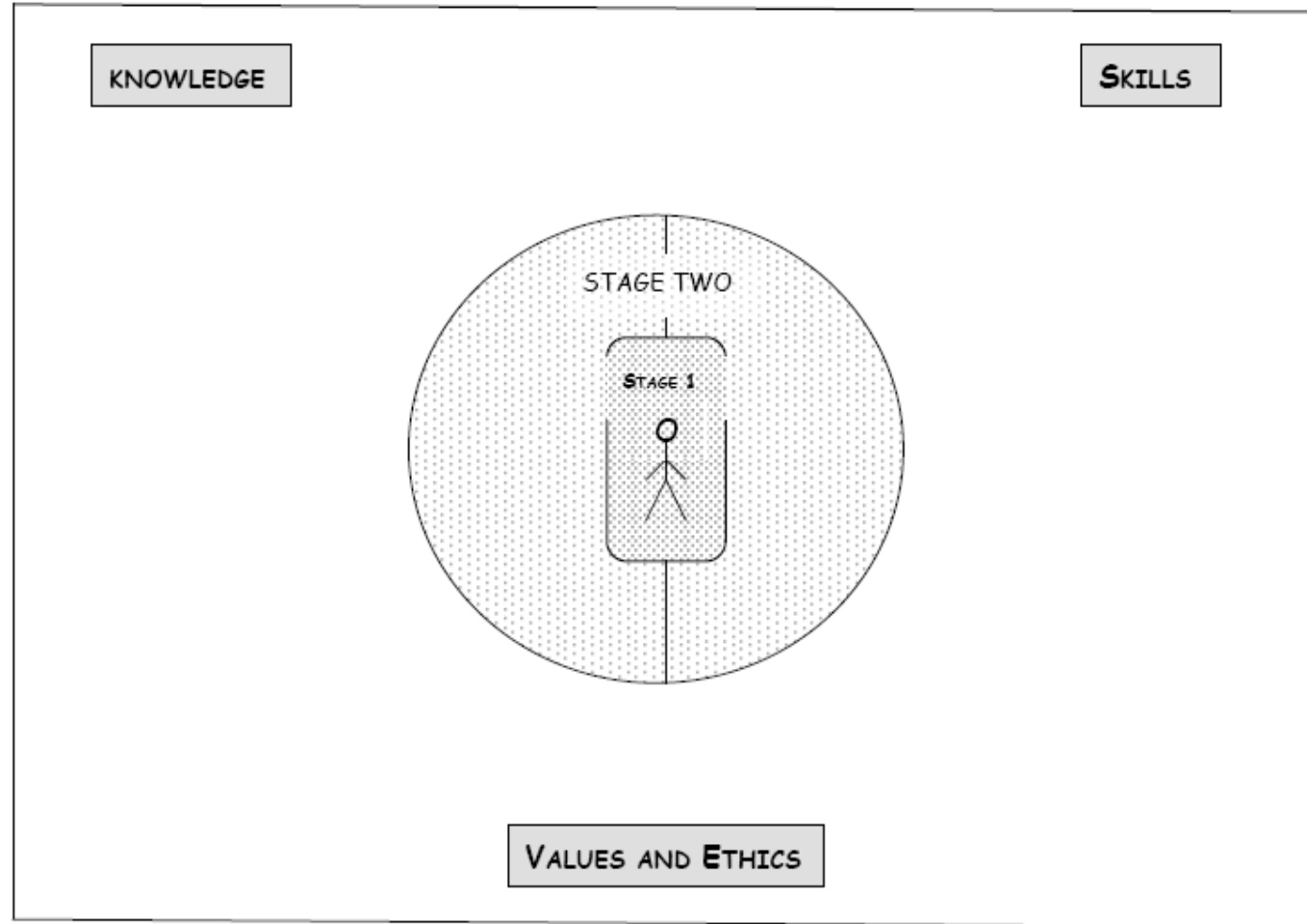
STAGE TWO THE THEORY CIRCLE

THEORY TO INFORM

THEORY TO INTERVENE



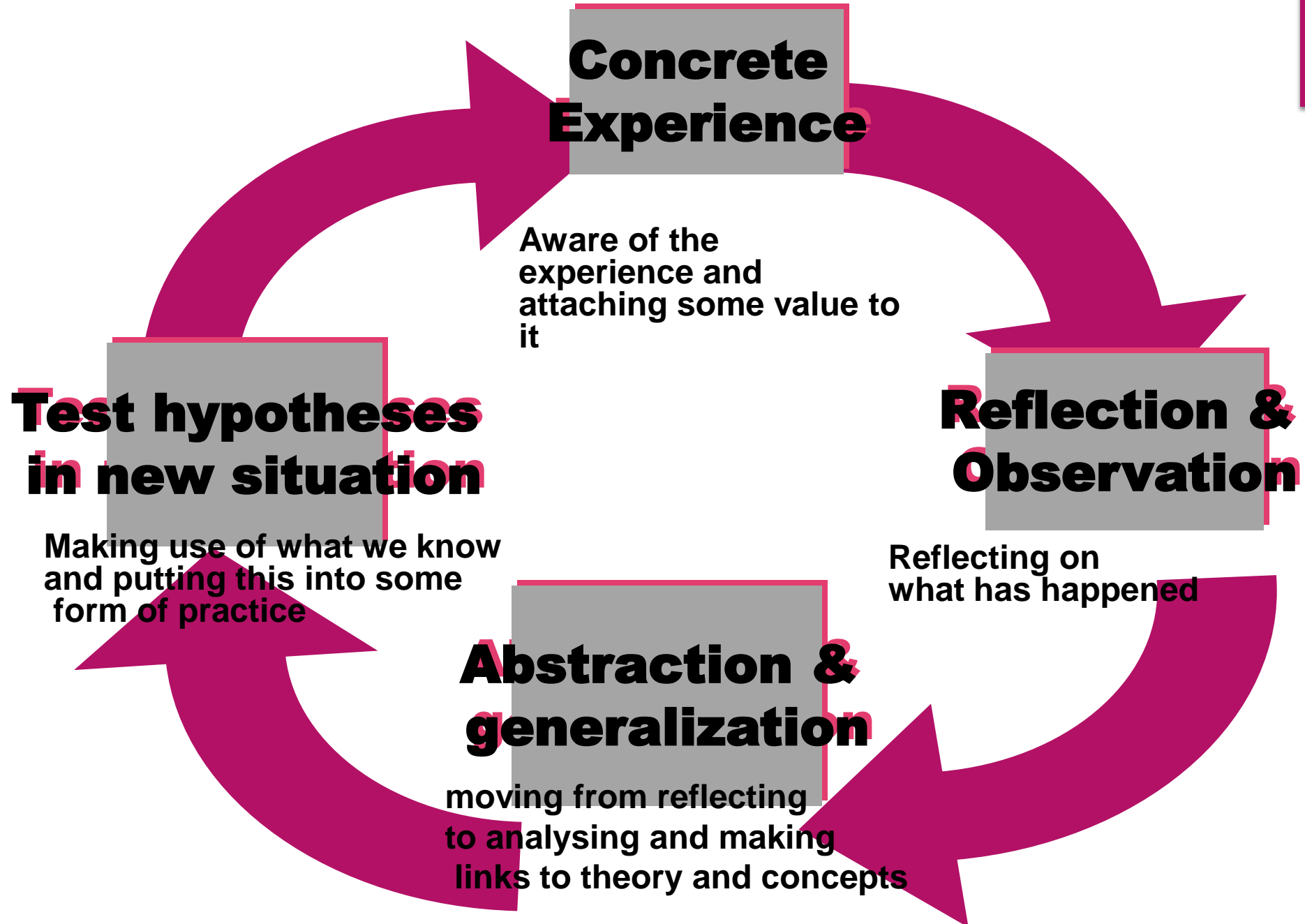
STAGE THREE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND VALUES





David Kolb

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CYCLE



Practice Teaching the Distance Learner. The Benefits

- ▶ **Distance Learning students experiences are different from the Undergraduate Courses**
- ▶ **Mature students**
- ▶ **Experienced workers**
- ▶ **Committed and driven to qualify as a Social Worker**
- ▶ **Financial investment**
- ▶ **Sound value base and knowledge of anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive practice**
- ▶ **Experiences linked to inter-agency and multi-agency working**
- ▶ **Can transfer new knowledge to practice early on in practice**