

WORKING PAPER #1

Survey of Perceptions of Creativity in Social Care Work & Education

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Background

The Irish Creativity and Innovation in Social Care (CISC) network is committed to the advancement of creativity and innovation in social care education and practice in Ireland to enhance the learning experience for students and improve the delivery of social care. In 2020 the network was successful in an application to the Network and Discipline Fund 2020 under the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education ¹ The cross-sectoral group is focusing on enhancing creative teaching and learning, specifically the exploration of eportfolios in supporting the development of social care educators' creative teaching practice and sharing best practice in creative learning among all members, as well as identifying opportunities for further professional development. To this end, in 2021 the CPD initiative will encompass three training sessions on the use of ePortfolios and one seminar on creativity and creative pedagogy.

This survey on the perceptions of creativity amongst Social Care Work educators was undertaken as preparation for the creativity and creative pedagogy seminar in the belief that the most productive forms of professional learning are gained through collaborative inquiry.

The questions used are similar to those that have been used in other discipline based surveys². The survey was administered by Louisa Goss and results were compiled by Professor Norman Jackson. The anonymised results of the survey are curated in Appendix 1 and integrated into this Working Paper together with the author's commentary.

Members of the CISC Network are invited to correct any misunderstandings or misrepresentations and to develop and add to the ideas and propositions contained in the working paper. Please add text in coloured font and return to Norman Jackson normanjjackson@btinternet for inclusion in the final draft. No later than April 10th.

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What is Social Care Work?

Social Care Ireland provides an authoritative succinct statement about the role of Social Care Workers³.

“Social Care Workers plan and provide professional care to vulnerable individuals and groups of all ages who experience marginalisation, disadvantage or special needs. As well as protecting and advocating for such individuals and groups, Social Care Workers professionally guide, challenge and support those entrusted to their care toward achieving their fullest potential. Client groups are varied and include children and adolescents in residential care; young people in detention schools; people with intellectual or physical disabilities; people who are homeless; people with alcohol/drug dependency; families in the community; or older people. Social Care Work is based on interpersonal relationships which require empathy, strong communication skills, self-awareness and an ability to use critical reflection. Teamwork and interdisciplinary work are also important in social care practice.

The core principles underpinning Social Care Work are similar to those of other helping professions, and they include respect for the dignity of clients; social justice; and empowerment of clients to achieve their full potential. Social Care Workers are trained, inter alia, in life span development, parenting, attachment & loss, interpersonal communication and behaviour management. Their training equips them to optimize the personal and social development of those with whom they work. In Ireland, the minimum per-requisite qualification to practice as a Social Care Worker in the publicly funded health sector is a 3-year Level 7 degree.

Social Care practice differs from Social Work practice in that it uses shared life-space opportunities to meet the physical, social and emotional needs of clients. Social Care Work uses strengths-based, needs-led approaches to mediate clients' presenting problems. A Social Care Practitioner will typically work in a direct person-to-person capacity with clients. He or she will seek to provide a caring, stable environment in which various social, educational and relationship interventions can take place in the day-to-day living space of the client. The Social Worker's role, on the other hand, is to manage the 'case', for example by arranging the residential child care placement in which a child is placed, co-ordinating case review meetings, negotiating the termination of a placement and responding to child protection concerns in a given area.

The profession will, in time, be subject to statutory registration by the Health and Social Care Professionals Council. The Council, which was established in March 2007 under the Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005, with the appointment of the Social Care Work Registration Board taking place in April 2015.”

Clearly Social Care Workers undertake, diverse roles in a range of contexts, involving complex relationships and interactions that connect, in a sensitive and effective way, a person in need of care with their particular circumstances and challenges to the care and emotional and practical support, resources and services they need to help them survive and flourish. Complex professional roles such as these require creativity in all its forms to work with complexity and empathy to achieve results that meet the needs of individual service users and their families in a way that optimises the finite and sometimes restricted resources available.

This survey is a first step towards developing deeper understandings of what creativity might mean in this complex professional context. It reveals that the Social Care Work educator and practitioner is trying to use and make sense of creativity in two very different practice contexts. Namely:

- When working with service users in the real world of social care work where creativity must be embodied in the thinking and enacted in the actions of the practitioner as they develop relationships and interact with the user they are serving.

- An element of this interaction is to encourage the person or persons they are serving to discover and use their own creativity as a means of developing their agency to survive and thrive.
- When working with learners in the institutional educational context of programmes that have been designed to prepare learners for the real world of social care work. Here creativity is embedded and embodied in their practice as a higher education teacher as they design curricular and learning opportunities for learners and facilitate learning.
- An element of this interaction is to help the learners they are serving to discover and use their own creativity as a means of developing their agency to survive and thrive in the professional world of social care they will inhabit when they enter the work force. It is clear from participants' responses that some of the contexts within which creativity is engaged are arts-based and it would be interesting to know how arts-based concepts of creativity sit alongside more socially-and relationally-based concepts.

Entangled within these contexts there may also be personal contexts within which social care work educator/practitioners use their own creativity, adding a third layer of complexity to understanding the phenomenon.

Social Care Work (SCW) Practice

Q1. Why do Social Care Workers need to be creative?

The SCW is dealing with the uncertainty and complexity of real world challenges in the everyday lives of people who for a variety of reasons are not able to completely look after themselves. At the same time, they are working with a system with finite resources. Finding unique solutions that meet the particular needs of clients within an environment of limited resources requires the ability to think and behave creatively to work holistically in meaningful and empathetic ways with the service user and in an effective and efficient way with the system within which the SCW works.

Social care practice by its very nature is unpredictable and characterised by working with the challenges of people with care and support needs. Responding to such problems with individualised solutions rather fixed ways of thinking and being requires the social care worker to have developed creative thinking capacities and creative competence to effectively address human problems and meet service users' needs. I believe creativity and critical thinking ability as well strong interpersonal skills are at the heart of what it means to be a good social care worker. (G)

The SCW' role is one of providing service. Many of people they are serving have experienced difficult challenges in their life and many been failed by others and and/or the social or health care system. To overcome mistrust, ambivalence or even antagonism the SCW must use their creativity to develop trusting, caring, empathetic and productive relationships with the people whose needs they are trying to serve.

The children and young people we work with, have witnessed, experienced and socially learnt from multiple layers of familial and societal failure; attachment disorder, broken promises, rigid bureaucratic systems and the legislative power of the family (A).

Social care workers need to be creative in order to develop empathetic responses and engagements with people, that acknowledge their full humanity and assert their right to participate in the production of culture. (D)

Epistemology of professional practice

To perform any role requiring complex thinking and action involves being able to assess a situation, decide what action needs to be taken, and then pursue it using appropriate behaviours, tools, and methodologies; monitoring the effects and results of one's actions; and responding to the feedback received ^{4 p. 18}. There is potential for creativity to be involved at all stages of this iterative process. Alternatively, the model of a self-regulating professional ^{5, 6} may be used to represent the three spaces of forethought, performance and afterthought within which creativity might reside.

SCW's need creativity, in their assessment of situations – to put themselves in their clients' shoes and see the world as they see and feel it. It is important to assimilate the contexts of the client in order to understand the life space they share.

[SCW's] can scan a room and pick up on the emotions, fear, disinterest, a lack of authenticity or 'a by the book, this is how it has to be done' attitude (A)

SCW's need their creativity when they design plans and strategies to meet the specific needs of the people they are serving and optimise the use of the resources and capacities available to them.

aspects of social care practice that involve 'Indirect' care.....require creative leadership to meet service users' needs in creative ways contributing to better outcomes in terms of service delivery. Examples include writing care plans... (G)

SCW's need creativity in the approaches and agency they use to implement care plans. They need to be able to draw upon an extensive repertoire of tools, skills and strategies, to respond to service users as their plan unfolds. There can be much uncertainty when interacting with a client and the ability to monitor the effects and reflect on actions as a situation unfolds and change a course of action if necessary, is another way in which creativity is used.

Ability to draw from a wide tool kit to reach peoples and address needs (B)

Reflecting in action, pivoting, fishing in, utilising all kinds of mediums, interactions and situations to provide an opportunity to hook onto something that that child or young person may be interested in or may relate to; in order to make a human connection. (A)

The social care worker must see and respect their clients for the unique individuals they are and develop relationships that can, heal, bring about more positive attitudes and mental states. Their role is to help them develop the confidence, skills and strategies to cope better with their circumstances and enable them to find their own solutions to their own problems.

Utilising the relationship to help heal or bring about change or find new ways to cope, requires creativity and relationality in the everyday context of the real-life space (A)

If we take creativity to be an innate ability that needs to be fostered within everyone, then the role of the SCW is to support people's creativity outlets, expression and solution finding abilities. This also involves recognising, and valuing their own unique creative abilities and putting those into practice. (C)

Their interventions are also geared to bringing about material and positive changes in the client's environment.

Creativity will also be embedded in the reflective thinking practices that enable SCW's to draw out deeper understandings of their interactions with clients and the circumstances of their clients and how they might be helped. Here creativity is employed in understanding meanings and making and seeing connections and possibilities that were not seen before.

They practice within an unpredictable environment where creative accommodation of individual's unique dispositions, responses and needs have to be constantly adjusted and reflected upon and applied to continuing practice. (E)

There is also an aspect of Social Care work that utilises particular creativity practices drawn from the arts as a means to engage clients and encourage them to discover and use their own creativity.

Participation in the creative arts can help vulnerable or traumatised clients to express their needs or make sense of their experience in ways that traditional assessment scales or talking therapies may not be able to. It can give a client a usable language to make sense of complex emotions (B)

The Social Care Workers creativity will be integrated into their thinking and doings in a world of constant change and it is not an easy or unproblematic matter to say that something is creative and something else isn't creative. Social care workers' creativity will be manifest in the relationships they build requiring a mix of analytical and compassionate and empathetic communication and behaviours that is unique to each individual. We might posit the idea that each relationship is a skilfully crafted creation in its own right informed by their understanding of the problems and possibilities for actions that will benefit their clients.

Q2 What sorts of things do social care workers do that demand or require them to use their creativity?

The ways in which Social Care Workers use their creativity varies between the different contexts groups of people they work with. These may include children and adolescents in residential care; young people in detention schools; people with intellectual or physical disabilities; people who are homeless; people with alcohol/drug dependency; families in the community; or older people.

When working with individuals, creativity is essential to seeing the possibilities, the affordances for actions, that will enable the SCW to relate to her client in a meaningful, productive and imaginative way. The building of relationships that facilitate mutual understanding is crucial to the work of the SCW.

They engage with human beings across all levels of their personality, including their emotional and imaginative aspects, which requires a wide range of communication skills and modes, including arts practices and other creative strategies. (D)

Interact on a social level with clients/ try to find pastimes/social outlets for clients(H)

Work with children and young people who have been neglected physically and sexually abused, are out of home in residential care, have reactive attachments disorder, borderline personality disorder,

severe mental health challenges, self-injuring behaviour, are suicidal, disengaged, flat, no hope. You have to think of creative ways to let the light in first, once the light can get in, there's hope. (A)

Empathetic understanding and finding different ways of listening (F)

Once an effective working relationship has been established with a client the SCW can draw upon their repertoire of skills and techniques to engage their clients in activities which will enable them to express their own creativity.

Engage with service users[in] creative and cultural pursuits, hobbies, and when appropriate therapeutic and therapy using creative modes. (C)

Eco Mapping with Children at key transition points in their life e.g. marital separation, transition in and out of care, transition to secondary school (B)

F Empathetic understanding and finding different ways of listening.

Problem-solving.

Finding the Common Third.

Supporting creative processes.

Facilitating creative activities.

Nurturing creativity as a positive disposition.

Direct tasks such as mealtimes, school, homework, family visits, personal care and activities (Byrne and McHugh, 2005, cited in Lyons 2011) require the use of creative ways of thinking and relating to others to achieve positive outcomes for service users. The use of creativity and arts based methodologies to working with service users enables social care workers to adapt to service users' interests, needs and life circumstances facilitating a person-centred approach to practice. In so doing, an individualised approach to service users' care and support needs is adopted rather than a 'one-size fits all' ethos. (G)

Community Development – community cultural development projects, global citizenship work, social justice projects, advocacy work, community arts projects, community murals, spoken word production etc. (B)

1:1 Family Support Work. Group work with special interest topics, resident groups, advocacy group etc. Afterschool and youth group settings for activity scheduling (B)

SOCIAL CARE EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE

Q3. What does being creative mean to a social care educator?

From the collective responses of Social Care Work educators, it is clear that they share a democratic view of creativity meaning that the ability to be creative is not restricted to a few individuals. Rather every individual has the potential to be creative in their own ways. This pattern of beliefs is typical of higher education educators in many different fields.

“The good news is that most teachers do not believe that creativity is a rare gift: most (but not all) agree that it is possible, with the right opportunity for people to develop their creativity. These

perceptions tally with Teresa Amabile's research⁷ into creativity in organisations which show that 'although some people have extreme levels of talent, everyone with normal human capacities is capable of producing creative work under the right conditions'.^{8 p14}

Positive, meaningful and trusting relationships are crucial to overall health and wellbeing and the development of such relationships with the users of care services is seen as an important focus for creativity in Social Care Work.

'Being creative in the relationality is the nexus of my social care practice'. I bring my lived experiences of relational practices, to the space of learning relationality. (A)

Relationships are also important between the SCW educator and their students. For this educator it was important to model the use of creativity in their interactions with learners.

For me, being creative in social care education involves using creative ways of relating to, and engaging with students as well as teaching about core concepts in social care creatively (G)

One SCW educator (F) emphasised the need for practitioners to have their own "source of creativity and keeping it replenished" by:

- *Having first-hand knowledge of creative joyful encounters.*
- *Understanding first-hand what flow is.*
- *Having a toolbox of creative practices to draw from.*
- *Thinking creatively and teaching creatively.*
- *Teaching about creativity.*
- *Teaching ways to be creative.*
- *Being an advocate for creative practices and the creative sector.*

Some SCW educators appreciate that some of the subjects they teach and the methods they use are particularly effective in engaging people who are likely to be recipients of SCW services.

Using case studies, drama, poetry and dance collaborations as creative approaches to therapeutic healing, offers a free flow to dealing with complex challenges which, in some cases have already been passed through the line and have the potential to be seen as 'unworkable, unsolvable' (trauma, addiction, not engaging in education, not engaging in life). (A)

For other SCW educators the focus is on developing the ability to think and act creatively and critically requiring educators to teach creatively in ways that will enable learners to develop and use their own creativity.

Helping students to learn necessities the ability to think and act creatively and critically all of which contributes to the personal and professional development of the student practitioner. Social care educators need to teach both creatively and for creativity so that graduates are quipped to meet the challenges and complexities of social care work. (G)

Having a concept of creativity that could be applied to their interactions with SCW learners was important for one SCW educator.

I tend to go with Ken Robinson's idea of creativity as 'Imaginative processes that are original and of value', and the issue for me is then to ascertain what is of value to the student in developing their empathy and confidence. (D)

Understanding that creativity is a normal part of everyday experience is also important as this enables clients to appreciate that creativity is not something that is exclusive to talented individuals but is something that everyone experiences everyday.

Understand reality is constructed through experiences and creativity has made the world what it is. (C)

SCW educators identify the use of the creative arts and art-based techniques in order to engage individuals or groups and create the conditions for positive relationships and interactions that will facilitate change.

Engaging a person or group through creative arts means, to create an experiential or learning experience that has the capacity to create change, give voice to complex emotion, act as a catharsis, or provide a means of escapism. (B)

The creativity of the SCW educator features in the way they practice for example in their desire and agency to innovate, to draw on and draw in multiple perspectives from other disciplines and creating environments within which individuals can flourish.

The ability to address content and teaching methods from an innovative perspective/ the ability to introduce knowledge from differing perspectives (interdisciplinary & Cross-disciplinary/ the ability to introduce a multi-intelligent atmosphere which will allow all clients work within their own parameters and learning styles (H)

Another SCW educator highlighted the need for those who are learning to become SCW's to be able to work collaboratively and creatively with others, which comes back to relationships again.

I emphasise individual and collaborative ways of working creatively with others (G)

Q4 What is it about the subjects and practices within social care education that stimulate and encourage teachers and students to be creative?

Social care programmes contain subjects and opportunities that encourage teachers and students to be creative. There are two themes in the responses of Social Care Work educators to this question. The first is that any subject has potential for creativity and this potential is realised by the practitioner or learner as they find ways of engaging creatively. However, some subjects or educational activities hold more potential than others. Activities involving imagination, the exploration of self and identity, and connected to this reflective practice are highlighted as being particularly important to the development of creativity.

All subjects have the potential for creativity, however those which explore discovery of self, self-reflection, reflection in action, discovering what self is capable of through creative interventions e.g. Drama, art, Reflective practice, community development, come to the fore. (A)

The focus on exploring self, and the relationship of self to others and the world was developed further by another SCW educator who emphasised the way that exploring self generates deep motivations to learn not only about themselves, their own identity and wellbeing but to connect these understandings to others. For this educator the quest for deeper understandings of lived experiences, is the site for creative thinking and action.

At the heart of social care is the exploration of ideas about 'The Self' and the human condition. Students are motivated to learn more about themselves, their lives and issues affecting wellbeing as well as ideas of human growth and potential. This exploration of identity in its broadest sense either consciously or subconsciously extends to other people's life circumstances and it is at this interface where parallels can be drawn to the student practitioner and service user's life experiences. I believe this quest to better understand the complexities of human lived experiences is the site for creative thinking and action. (G)

Reflection and reflective practice was highlighted in three responses (A,D and E) and was implicit in another (G)

The engagement with other people on an emotional, imaginative and reflective level. (D)

Reflective engagement with content and sector based scenario. (E)

Social Care Work educators also make use of subjects that explicitly engage with creativity through arts-based methodologies.

C Creativity is taught using creative art but I try to communicate the wider implications

Q5 Is creativity, explicitly recognised in the outcomes of social care education?

This question can be answered in different ways at different levels. Respondent C provided a comprehensive explanation at the level of national standards.

Social Care has two external set of standards: The Social Care Workers Registration Board (SCWRB, 2017) and Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI, 2014). Colleges apply for their SC programme to be legally recognised as a 'professional' course by SCWRB (students can then register and work and this is ongoing and not all colleges applied) and QQI standards are required in all colleges. Neither standards nor proficiencies are prescriptive as each college determines the best way to meet them.

(1) 'Standards of Proficiency for Social Care Workers' (SCWRB, 2017)

*'Understand the role of, and be able to demonstrate skills in the use of **creative** and recreational interventions in social care work to meet the needs of the service user in a variety of contexts'*

The above proficiency is one of 80, so while significant it doesn't feature prominently.

(2) The QQI standards 'Social Care Work - Awards Standards' also informs programme design (QQI, 2014).

- *Demonstrate specialised technical, **creative** or conceptual skills and tools across an area of study*
- *Respond in a **creative** and individualised manner to the service-user*
- *Research: Contribute **creative** and innovative perspectives to develop social care practice*
- *Act in a range of varied and specific contexts involving **creative** and non-routine activities; transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical or **creative** skills to a range of contexts*
- *Utilise diagnostic and **creative** skills in a range of functions in a wide variety of contexts*
- *Use advanced skills to conduct research, or advanced technical or professional activity, accepting accountability for all related decision making; transfer and apply diagnostic and **creative** skills in a range of contexts*

a wide array of differing approaches has been taken to the interpretation of all 80 standards by education providers across Ireland with some institutes making use of creativity and the arts to

greater or lesser extents to meet many other proficiencies. This is based on anecdotal evidence from conversations among social care educators at different sites across Ireland (G)

Some programmes contain modules that are specifically focused on creativity in the context of social care while others contain modules that utilise the creative arts subjects and methodologies to develop concepts and skills relevant to creative practise in social care work.

In the programme on which I teach, it is, yes. There is a dedicated module 'Creativity in Social Care'. (D)

With three modules over three years 'Creative approaches to social care (art/drama or rec) (B)

Other programmes may contain dedicated experiences and opportunities for the use of creative interventions.

Yes, [creativity] is reflected in the learning outcomes for each module .e.g. all students have an opportunity to being able to facilitate an external group through creative interventions (A)

But not all programmes provide opportunities for creative development in an explicit way but may do so implicitly.

Not currently on our programme, but this is changing. Arts-based practice is (F)

It is not explicitly recognised, but the objectives endorse divergent thinking processes, where many answers can solve differing problems/tasks. (H)

Q6 How is creativity recognised in the curriculum of social care education?

The Social Care Work curriculum must reflect national standards of proficiency which address the matter of creativity.

It is recognised through Domain 2 of Coru's framework of proficiencies, which in turn feeds into the curriculum. (D)

SCW educator A explains:

Social care graduate must attain the standard of proficiency

<https://coru.ie/files-education/scwrbs-standards-of-proficiency-for-social-care-workers.pdf>

under CORU Guidelines <https://coru.ie/files-education/scwrbs-standards-of-proficiency-for-social-care-workers.pdf>

Under domain no.5 Professional Knowledge and Skills

16 . Understand the role of, and be able to demonstrate skills in the use of creative and recreational interventions in social care work to meet the needs of the service user in a variety of contexts

The view was also expressed that the way creativity is designed into the curriculum varies and may be largely implicit in the curriculum rather than being taught or assessed.

It varies from one institute to the next depending on the culture and on how well the Course Board/Social care degree Programme review staff are rooted in Sector experience and social care specific education and not drawn for other departments for HR reasons. (E)

Creativity is implicit in much of the social care curriculum rather than explicitly taught and assessed. Where it does feature in module outcomes it is typically within arts based or creative studies modules solely. (G)

Specific illustrations drawn from programmes provided by Social Care Work educators are detailed below.

*With three modules over three years 'Creative approaches to social care (art/drama or rec) (C)
It is taught in our creative practice modules. (F)*

Table 1 Compilation of forms of teaching that encourage and enable learners to be creative together with the types of creativity that are encouraged through these forms of teaching (Participant C)

| Forms of teaching that encourage and enable creativity | |
|--|---|
| | Teaching Activities – in Art Studio prior to Covid 19 |
| Experimentation | Fun and engaging activities – introducing creativity on many levels |
| Non-judgmental (not assessed) art work | Assessment based on engagement and knowledge |
| No external standards applied – unlike art education | Assessment based on engagement and knowledge |
| Autonomy, freedom and choice | Fun and engaging activities – introducing creativity on many levels |
| Rewarding effort | Assessment based on engagement and knowledge |
| Valuing risk | Fun and engaging activities – introducing creativity on many levels |
| Encouragement | Fun and engaging activities – introducing creativity on many levels |
| Asking reflective questions | Discussion forums – personal reflection |
| Fostering belonging and common goals | Fun and engaging activities – introducing creativity on many levels |
| Theory development – moving from simplistic lay language to complex and abstract ideas Positioning creativity as a normal drive and valuable tool in SC | Lectures and discussion - creativity theory and children’s creative development - The nature of reality - Signs and meaning making |
| Peer interaction | Fun and engaging activities |
| Envision future roles – SCW encouraging other people creativity | Lectures and discussion & Fun and engaging activities |
| Teamwork – students work together but I don’t believe in group marks (counterproductive!) | Teaching each other skills and doing activities with external groups (disability) |
| Lecturer position: Student novice to Partnership approach with lecturer over the three years | Moving from high support to low support as students’ progress over time |
| Types of creativity encouraged in these forms of teaching (also know about) | |
| Personal creativity Recognising everyday creativity as valuable | |
| Creativity in groups. Ideas development from groups | |
| Professional role of creativity | |
| Creativity as a way to foster engagement in SC relationships | |
| Creativity as healing and cathartic | |
| Creativity as therapy | |
| Creativity as a mode of expression for unconscious – tool for reflection and contemplation | |

Q7. What forms of teaching encourage/enable students in social care education to be creative? What types of creativity are being encouraged in these forms of teaching?

Negative views of the idea that creativity can be taught are based on transmission models of teaching where teachers attempt to transfer their own knowledge and sense-making to students through lecture dominated teaching, where students’ engagements in learning are predominantly based on information transfer and are heavily prescribed and controlled by the teacher, and where summative assessment drives the learning process. Such conditions are less likely to foster students’ creativity than when a teacher acts as a stimulator, facilitator, resource provider, guide or coach, and where students are given the space and freedom to make decisions about their own learning

process and outcomes.....Teaching for creativity requires a pedagogic stance that is facilitative, enabling, responsive, open to possibilities, and collaborative, and which values process as much as outcomes^{8 p17}

A wide range of pedagogical strategies are available to the SCW educator. Implicit in many of the educator responses is the idea that “guided discover [rather than] didactic teaching” (H) plays an important role in the facilitation of students’ creative development.

Respondent C provides a comprehensive overview (Table 1) of teaching and learning strategies that encourage / enable students’ creativity. It also draws attention to the negative impact of the pandemic on face to face interactive teaching activities.

Additional perspectives on educational approaches that encourage and enable creativity are provided by SCW educators F and G.

F Outdoor play

- *Working with Nature*
- *Applied Drama Practice*
- *Art and Crafts*
- *Spectacle and Performance*
- *Creative Writing*
- *Storytelling*
- *Active learning in tutorial groups. Eg: Using lego for reflective practice, kite building for team-working, model-building for concept teaching.*
- *Assessment strategies. Eg: Designing interactive installations for exhibitions, story trails, journaling (e-portfolios).*
- *Working with invited artists, members of the local community. Eg: Making arpilleras, learning craft traditions.*

G *Experiential forms of learning and interactive teaching approaches stimulate students interest and curiosity in thinking and being creative. Collaborative ways of working especially projects that directly involve service users make use of creative forms of learning and teaching.*

Clearly, amongst this group of SCW educators a large range of teaching and learning strategies are employed to encourage and enable creativity. An attempt is made in Table 2 to categorise the examples that are offered.

Several SCW educators drew attention to the development of knowledge and theory that is relevant to understanding creativity in the context of the role of the SCW.

Knowledge of the relationship building and diverse communicative aspects of creative engagement. When this is established through theoretical and reflective means, then individual creative approaches and their potential to support clients can then be explored. (E)

Theory development – moving from simplistic lay language to complex and abstract ideas. Positioning creativity as a normal drive and valuable tool in SC (C)

Activities that encourage learners to be creative are likely to provide:

- Permission and encouragement to take risks knowing they will not be penalised through assessment but be rewarded for effort
- A sense of autonomy, freedom to act and choices
- That encourage opportunities for experimentation

- That involve collaboration on projects in which goals are shared
- That may involve first-hand experience of making
- That engender a sense of fun and playfulness
- To recognise and build confidence in their own creativity
- Opportunities and support for reflection

Table 2 Categories of educational approaches to encouraging and enabling creativity in Social Care Work education

| Experiencing the world | Experiencing the arts | Collaborative & Co-Production experiences | Activities involving self |
|--|---|--|--|
| Outdoor/Nature | Arts & Crafts – Making and creating | Team working with peers | Developing knowledge and understanding about creativity |
| Placements <i>e.g. direct work with individuals and groups... and the student has...the autonomy to plan, deliver and evaluate short term actions e.g. arts based workshops, drama based workshops, music based workshops etc. e.g students engage with service users, mostly adults with learning difficulties, in the development and production of a show of some kind</i> | Drama & Performance Role play Case studies through drama <i>e.g. Diad and Triad Role Play – practitioner service user and observer to help people explore applications of theory to practice e.g. the students have performed a ‘criminal trial’ roleplay online.</i> | Working together in tutor groups | Journals for reflection <i>e.g. Reflective journals and portfolio work which captures a learners experiential learning within modules</i> |
| | Creative writing & storytelling | Working with artists | |
| | Interdisciplinary / cross-disciplinary education | Working with members of the community <i>e.g. communal creativity from design, process and production with outside groups</i> | |
| | | Lecturer/ student partnerships | |

SCW educator C provides a summary of the types of and contexts for creativity that is being developed with the pedagogical strategies being used in social care work educator.

Table 3 Types of creativity encouraged in forms of teaching used in SCW education

| |
|--|
| Personal creativity - recognising that everyday creativity is valuable |
| Creativity in groups. Ideas development from groups |
| Professional role of creativity |
| Creativity as a way to foster engagement in SC relationships |
| Creativity as healing and cathartic |
| Creativity as therapy |
| Creativity as a mode of expression for unconscious – tool for reflection and contemplation |

Two SCW educators offered perspectives on the underpinning theories of creativity and learning on which their own pedagogical practice is based.

creativity in daily life is promoted underpinned by theories of creativity that place importance on the creative person, the environment (press), and creativity as a process (G)

I tend to attempt a transformational approach, based on an andragogical understanding of education, whereby the students are active agents in their own learning (D)

Q8 What contexts/conditions/situations for learning encourage/enable students to use and demonstrate their creativity in social care education?

The everyday learning of a SCW is deeply contextual so understanding contexts is key to being able to function as an effective practitioner. An appreciation of contexts, and how creativity might be involved is initially gained in the classroom.

Opportunities are explored through theoretical contexts in lecture based alongside case study/scenario-based analysis whose outcomes are explored in tutorials and during practical based practice. (E)

We engage in a mix of whole class, group and individual projects, along with participatory workshops, to expose the students to as wide a range of learning contexts as possible (B)

Every teaching and learning activity outlined in the previous section (Q7) provides a context and the activities that encourage learners to be creative outlined all contribute to the contextual understanding, of conditions and situations that encourage and enable SCW learners to use their creativity. SCW educator summarised some of the characteristics of the educational contextual environment that are conducive to creative development.

F Creating and maintaining a culturally safe space.

- *Humour.*
- *Applauding 'mistakes'.*
- *Welcoming questions.*
- *TIME!*
- *And time for reflection.*
- *A physical environment conducive to creative practices.*
- *A well-resourced space.*
- *A willingness to participate.*
- *Work done on valuing of creativity, nurturing their creativity and knowledge of creativity, then moving to developing their skills of facilitation.*

Another SCW educator (G) emphasised the importance of contexts that encouraged communication and other forms of interaction between learners and service users as being particularly important for development of learner creativity.

creative approaches to engaging and communicating with service users as well as direct work with service users are opportunities for social care students to use their creativity in social care education. (G)

SCW involves working with uncertainty so it is important for educators to create environments for learners to overcome their fears and develop their knowledge, skills and confidence safely so that they can, ultimately, function with skill and confidence in a professional world that is full of challenge and uncertainty.

Safe learning environment to explore one's own learning and development (B)

Supporting the students to step into the unknown of how they can use their creativity in social care. (A)

[We run] groups with external organisations and this helps the students to overcome fears and realise their own and the client's creativity potential (C)

Confidence is also enhanced as learners are given opportunities to work in real world placement settings and with the right level of support plan and execute their plans then evaluate the impact they have had.

Work placement settings where direct work with individuals and groups is possible and the student has been provided with the autonomy to plan, deliver and evaluate short term actions e.g. arts based workshops, drama based workshops, music based workshops etc. (B)

students engage with service users, mostly adults with learning difficulties, in the development and production of a show of some kind (D)

Placement settings and their assessment learning outcomes are orientated towards students' reflection in, on and for creative engagement in workplace scenarios (E)

authentic contexts which reflect the content being disseminated (e.g., theatre) (H)

Contexts and their influences, need to be reflected upon in order to be understood, so developing the skills and habits of a reflective practitioner is crucial to becoming aware of one's own development and the effects of one's own practice. Both the educational and practice context must provide opportunities for reflection.

Contexts for reflection, self-reflection (A)

Reflective journals and portfolio work which captures a learners experiential learning within modules (B)

Placement settings and their assessment learning outcomes are orientated towards students reflection in, on and for creative engagement in workplace scenarios (E)

time for reflection (F)

Q9 What factors/conditions inhibit students' creativity in social care education?

SCW educators believe that there are three sources of factors that inhibit creativity in social care education.

The first set of factors are related to the learner. For example, beliefs that they are not creative, or a lack of confidence, unwillingness to try, fear of failure and not seeming to be perfect. Limited perceptions of what creativity means, or perceptions that do not see or value creativity in social care work practice, may also inhibit their engagement with a wider understanding of creativity.

*A Lack of confidence, I can't do that
Afraid to let go,
Lived experiences
Self-image media obsessed culture of being perfect (A)*

They link creativity to drawing and once this is addressed they are freed up to engage. More students [able to] do lots of different types of creative work outside (make up, music, acting, baking, tattoos, hair, fashion...) and pointing out how valuable that is, helps. (C)

Anxiety and lack of confidence. (D)

Barriers to students being creative range from not believing or identify as a creative individual to not recognising creativity as an essential trait of being an effective social care worker. Broadly speaking students do not prioritise creativity high on their list and often view it as an add-on in their studies while on other occasions creativity holds very little or no value for the student (this is a rare occurrence). Some students are image conscious and can be preoccupied by how they 'look' and come across to their peers and fixated on 'getting it right'. So, self-consciousness and difficulty identifying as a creative individual as well as pedestrian ways of thinking and doing things are the main inhibitors from my experience of teaching social care students. (G)

The second set of factors relate to conditions within their educational experience such as limited opportunities within a programme to apply theory to practice or enable learners to interact and collaborate. There may also be an overemphasis on didactic teaching methods and assessment that does not encourage creativity. Colleagues also may not value creativity and this may be reflected in a lack of commitment to creativity in their teaching. There may also be a focus on long term goals (perhaps driven by outcomes?) rather than the immediate improvisation required in practice within which creativity is more likely to reside.

Academic assessment schedule and the lack of integration across modules to enable the application of theory to practice using creative approaches. (B)

Lectures who do not value it pivotal role in social care through lack of social care work experience or attitudes that deem creative engagement as an ancillary practice. (E)

Poor teaching, lack of confidence (teacher and student) and a deficit of all of the above.(F)

Didactic teaching methods/ over-emphasis on skills and techniques/ an absence of interaction with fellow learners/ Over-emphasis on long term goals.(H)

A third set of factors relate to conditions within their placement experience.

Poor quality placement settings where students are shadowing staff but are not being provided with opportunities to work directly with service users (B)

Q10. How is students' creativity in social care education assessed? What types of assessment work best and what sort of criteria are used?

The views of higher education teachers on whether creativity can be assessed fall into four camps. Some teachers believe that students' creativity can be evaluated through explicit assessment criteria. Others believe that insufficient attention is given to recognising students' creativity and that at best the evaluation and recognition is implicit. The third group believe that is not possible and or desirable to assess creativity. While teachers in the fourth group value creativity but don't know how to assess it. ^{8 p18}

SCW educators fall into the first group of higher education teachers. They believe that creativity can be assessed in both a theoretical and practical sense. A wide range of assessment methods and criteria are used to assess creativity.

Educator G draws the distinction between assessing "students' creativity where the focus is on evidence of growth in the student's thinking and ways of relating to others as well as the development of interpersonal skills and creative methods of communicating with others" and "where the focus is the self-development of the social care student and designing and planning creative interventions". In the first context group work and portfolio type assessments work best in the assessment

of creativity in the second contexts students are directly assessed on their ability to critically evaluate their own creativity and creative practice.

Portfolios of work containing learners' reflections would appear to be common but artwork contained within a portfolio of work might not be assessed (Educator C). The ability to reflect on self (one's own development) and the creative thinking, interventions and outcomes of one's own actions is also important.

the ability to reflect and think deeply and evaluate the impact of artistic processes on own thinking about creativity and other key topics and issues in social care allows for the assessment of creativity in social care education. (G)

The student critically reflects on their personal creative journey, their challenges and evidence of self-realisations because of engaging in the creative process. (B)

reflective practice on group creative engagement. (E)

Criteria used to assess creativity reflect the educational context in which creativity is being used. Originality is mentioned several responses but it is not ubiquitous.

The work uses imagination and creativity, is original and unique. (B)

criteria include knowledge and understanding/originality of thought, level of detail and presentations. (H)

Educator B provides a flavour of the sorts of contexts and criteria for assessing creativity used in SCW education

Creative Interpretation Commitment and Critique

- *The student exhibits own opinions and demonstrates evidence of independent learning.*
- *The work is uses imagination and creativity, is original and unique.*
- *The student makes connections to theory, prior learning, and the world around them.*

The student exhibits self-confidence in his or her portfolio or assessment work.

The student critically reflects on their personal creative journey, their challenges and evidence of self-realisations because of engaging in the creative process.

Theoretical Reflective Practice

The student can demonstrate clear links between theory to practice

The student can demonstrate ability to modify creative activities to support a broad range of client groups e.g. children, people with disabilities, elderly population.

The student can demonstrate understanding of how group dynamics and the environment can impact on the creative process.

The student can set personal goals for their ongoing professional learning and development.

The student communicates perseverance, internal motivation and honesty in their engagement with other students or services users during practice placements

Closing remarks

This Working Paper should be viewed as the first step in an ongoing professional conversation aimed at exploring the phenomenon we call creativity. There are two very different but related contexts for the conversation. The first is the professional field of Social Care Work practice, the second is the professional field of Social Care education. A key question is, *how do people learn to be and become Social Care practitioners through the education and training they receive and the experiences they gain while they are studying to become a practitioner?* for it is in this process that they learn context, situation and person and situation specific meanings of creativity.

Not surprisingly, there are similarities in the way creativity is viewed in the practice fields of social care and in social work. A copy of similar survey conducted among social care workers (Jackson and Burgess 2005) can be found at

Sources

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25/03/21

APPENDIX PARTICIPANT'S RESPONSES

Q1. Why do Social Care Workers need to be creative?

A *The children and young people we work with, have witnessed, experienced and socially learnt from multiple layers of familial and societal failure; attachment disorder, broken promises, rigid bureaucratic systems and the legislative power of the family.*

Some reside mostly in fight or flight mode, can scan a room and pick up on the emotions, fear, disinterest, a lack of authenticity or 'a by the book, this is how it has to be done' attitude.

Utilising the relationship to help heal or bring about change or find new ways to cope, requires creativity and relationality in the everyday context of the real-life space.

Reflecting in action, pivoting, fishing in, utilising all kinds of mediums, interactions and situations to provide an opportunity to hook onto something that that child or young person may be interested in or may relate to; in order to make a human connection.

Creativity, cognitively, and in action, has the potential to provide a hook for hope.

B *Ability to draw from a wide tool kit to reach peoples and address needs
Escapism from life stressors / Protective Factor or Buffer against stressors
Means of expression*

Ability to reflect on good practice and

Participation in the creative arts can help vulnerable or traumatised clients to express their needs or make sense of their experience in ways that traditional assessment scales or talking therapies may not be able to. It can give a client a usable language to make sense of complex emotions

C *If we take creativity to be an innate ability that needs to be fostered within everyone, then the role of the SCW is to support people's creativity outlets, expression and solution finding abilities. This also involves recognising, and valuing their own unique creative abilities and putting those into practice.*

D *Social care workers need to be creative in order to develop empathetic responses and engagements with people, that acknowledge their full humanity and assert their right to participate in the production of culture.*

E *They practice within an unpredictable environment where creative accommodation of individual's unique dispositions, responses and needs have to be constantly adjusted and reflected upon and applied to continuing practice.*

F *So that they can better support the creativity of those they work with and for.*

To enjoy life and be enjoyable to be around!

To use creative thinking in their everyday.

To be better professionals.

G *Social care practice by its very nature is unpredictable and characterised by working with the challenges of people with care and support needs. Responding to such problems with individualised solutions rather fixed ways of thinking and being requires the social care worker to have developed creative thinking capacities and creative competence to effectively address human problems and meet service users' needs. I believe creativity and critical thinking ability as well strong interpersonal skills are at the heart of what it means to be a good social care worker.*

H The contexts in which the workers operate vary considerably. Divergent thinking is essential to facilitate the differing groups of people.

Q2 What sorts of things do social care workers do that demand or require them to use their creativity?

A Work with children and young people who have been neglected physically and sexually abused, are out of home in residential care, have reactive attachments disorder, borderline personality disorder, severe mental health challenges, self-injuring behaviour, are suicidal, disengaged, flat, no hope. You have to think of creative ways to let the light in first, once the light can get in, there's hope.

B 1:1 Family Support Work

Group work with special interest topics, resident groups, advocacy group etc.

Afterschool and youth group settings for activity scheduling

Eco Mapping with Children at key transition points in their life e.g. marital separation, transition in and out of care, transition to secondary school

Community Development – community cultural development projects, global citizenship work, social justice projects, advocacy work, community arts projects, community murals, spoken word production etc.

C Engage with service users on many levels, from solution finding, creative and cultural pursuits,

Some SCW's engage in group activity requiring their creativity and the creativity of members of the group hobbies, and when appropriate therapeutic and therapy using creative modes.

D They engage with human beings across all levels of their personality, including their emotional and imaginative aspects, which requires a wide range of communication skills and modes, including arts practices and other creative strategies.

E In order to care for, meet needs or advocate, central to Social care work practice (or what a social care worker 'does') is to build a relationship with client groups/service users. Relationship building is a non-linear activity. They do not happen in a vacuum, silence or absence. They require engagement. And, the existence of something to make that engagement possible. That something is where connections, associations are made and where a shared present is co-created. This fusion is creative. Further engagements through creative in-put and out-put sustain and develop it.

F Empathetic understanding and finding different ways of listening.

Problem-solving.

Finding the Common Third.

Supporting creative processes.

Facilitating creative activities.

Nurturing creativity as a positive disposition.

G Social care workers provide 'Direct' and 'Indirect' care to service user groups with a wide diversity of care and support needs. Direct tasks such as mealtimes, school, homework, family visits, personal care and activities (Byrne and McHugh, 2005, cited in Lyons 2011) require the use of creative ways of thinking and relating to others to achieve positive outcomes for service users. The use of creativity and arts based methodologies to working with service users enables social care workers to adapt to service users' interests, needs and life circumstances facilitating a person-centred approach to practice. In so doing, an individualised approach to service users' care and support needs is adopted rather than a 'one-size fits all' ethos.

On the other hand, those aspects of social care practice that involve 'Indirect' care or 'organisational activities' (organisational design or environment) require creative leadership to meet service users' needs in creative ways

contributing to better outcomes in terms of service delivery. Examples include writing care plans, programme planning and communicating with work colleagues (Ainsworth and Fulcher 1981; Anglin et al. 1990; Byrne and McHugh 2005).

H Interact on a social level with clients/ try to find pastimes/social outlets for clients/

Q3. What does being creative mean to a social care educator?

A 'Being creative in the relationality is the nexus of my social care practice'. I bring my lived experiences of relational practices, to the space of learning relationality. (A)

Using case studies, drama, poetry and dance collaborations as creative approaches to therapeutic healing, offers a free flow to dealing with complex challenges which, in some cases have already been passed through the line and have the potential to be seen as 'unworkable, unsolvable' (trauma, addiction, not engaging in education, not engaging in life).

B Engaging a person or group through creative arts means, to create an experiential or learning experience that has the capacity to create change, give voice to complex emotion, act as a catharsis, or provide a means of escapism

C Developing the ability to use creativity as a tool both professionally and personally. Understand reality is constructed through experiences and creativity has made the world what it is. Creativity can contribute to personal, societal and global change in the world.

D I tend to go with Ken Robinson's idea of creativity as 'Imaginative processes that are original and of value', and the issue for me is then to ascertain what is of value to the student in developing their empathy and confidence.

E Being a responsive communicator.

F Having a source of creativity and keeping it replenished.

- *Having first-hand knowledge of creative joyful encounters.*
- *Understanding first-hand what flow is.*
- *Having a toolbox of creative practices to draw from.*
- *Thinking creatively and teaching creatively.*
- *Teaching about creativity.*
- *Teaching ways to be creative.*
- *Being an advocate for creative practices and the creative sector.*

G For me being creative in social care education involves using creative ways of relating to, and engaging with students as well as teaching about core concepts in social care creatively. Helping students to learn necessities the ability to think and act creatively and critically all of which contributes to the personal and professional development of the student practitioner. Social care educators need to teach both creatively and for creativity so that graduates are quipped to meet the challenges and complexities of social care work.

In my teaching practice I emphasise individual and collaborative ways of working creatively with others in the personal and professional development of the social care student.

H The ability to address content and teaching methods from an innovative perspective/ the ability to introduce knowledge from differing perspectives (interdisciplinary & Cross-disciplinary/ the ability to

introduce a multi-intelligent atmosphere which will allow all clients work within their own parameters and learning styles

Q4 What is it about the subjects and practices within social care education that stimulate and encourage teachers and students to be creative?

A All subjects have the potential for creativity, however those which explore discovery of self, self-reflection, reflection in action, discovering what self is capable of through creative interventions e.g. Drama, art, Reflective practice, community development , come to the fore.

B Developing the ability to use creativity as a tool both professionally and personally. Understand reality is constructed through experiences and creativity has made the world what it is. Creativity can contribute to personal, societal and global change in the world.

C Creativity is taught using creative art but I try to communicate the wider implications

D The engagement with other people on an emotional, imaginative and reflective level.

E Reflective engagement with content and sector based scenario.

F Sorry, I don't understand this question.

G At the heart of social care is the exploration of ideas about 'The Self' and the human condition. Students are motivated to learn more about themselves, their lives and issues affecting wellbeing as well as ideas of human growth and potential. This exploration of identity in its broadest sense either consciously or subconsciously extends to other people life circumstances and it is at this interface where parallels can be drawn to the student practitioner and service user's life experiences. I believe this quest to better understand the complexities of human lived experiences is the site for creative thinking and action.

H The content is applied, and the chief methods of assessment are continuous assessment.

Q5 Is creativity, explicitly recognised in the outcomes of social care education?

A Yes, it is reflected in the learning outcomes for each module .e.g. all students have an opportunity to being able to facilitate an external group through creative interventions

B Creative and Interactions approaches to social care components eg. Drama, Art, Sports and Rec.

C Yes and no. Social care has two external set of standards; The Social Care Workers Registration Board (SCWRB, 2017) and Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI, 2014). Colleges apply for their SC programme to be legally recognised as a 'professional' course by SCWRB (students can then register and work and this is ongoing and not all colleges applied) and QQI standards are required in all colleges. Neither standards nor proficiencies are prescriptive as each college determines the best way to meet them.

(1) 'Standards of Proficiency for Social Care Workers' (SCWRB, 2017)

'Understand the role of, and be able to demonstrate skills in the use of creative and recreational interventions in social care work to meet the needs of the service user in a variety of contexts'

The above proficiency is one of 80, so while significant it doesn't feature prominently.

(2) The QQI standards 'Social Care Work - Awards Standards' also informs programme design (QQI, 2014).

- Demonstrate specialised technical, creative or conceptual skills and tools across an area of study*
- Respond in a creative and individualised manner to the service-user*
- Research: Contribute creative and innovative perspectives to develop social care practice*

- Act in a range of varied and specific contexts involving creative and non-routine activities; transfer and apply theoretical concepts and/or technical or creative skills to a range of contexts
- Utilise diagnostic and creative skills in a range of functions in a wide variety of contexts
- Use advanced skills to conduct research, or advanced technical or professional activity, accepting accountability for all related decision making; transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills in a range of contexts

D In the programme on which I teach, it is, yes. There is a dedicated module 'Creativity in Social Care'.

E Yes. And in the educational proficiencies of CORU.

F Not currently on our programme, but this is changing. Arts-based practice is.

G At a statutory level only one of the Standards of Proficiency for Social Care Workers explicitly reference creativity (CORU, 2017). Regrettably, this standard refers to creative skills solely emphasising skills in the use of creative and recreational interventions in social care work. That said, a wide array of differing approaches has been taken to the interpretation of all 80 standards by education providers across Ireland with some institutes making use of creativity and the arts to greater or lesser extents to meet many other proficiencies. This is based on anecdotal evidence from conversations among social care educators at different sites across Ireland.

H It is not explicitly recognised, but the objectives endorse divergent thinking processes, where many answers can solve differing problems/tasks.

Q6 How is creativity recognised in the curriculum of social care education?

A Social care graduate must attain the standard of proficiency

<https://coru.ie/files-education/scwrbs-standards-of-proficiency-for-social-care-workers.pdf>

under CORU Guidelines <https://coru.ie/files-education/scwrbs-standards-of-proficiency-for-social-care-workers.pdf>

Under domain no.5 Professional Knowledge and Skills

16 . Understand the role of, and be able to demonstrate skills in the use of creative and recreational interventions in social care work to meet the needs of the service user in a variety of contexts

B

- Expected Creativity – students promoted to be creative within assessments and class using a variety of topics or themes.
- Proactive Creativity – students inspired to create through self-reflection and motivation to learn from engaging with class content, theory and practice frameworks.
- Responsive Creativity -students engages in creative process to respond to assignment brief, portfolio or reflective journaling assessments.
- Contributory Creativity – student spontaneously engages in creativity. Using creative means for personal exploration, personality disengagement or for escapism e.g. journaling, doodling, painting, creative writing, sketching.

C With three modules over three years 'Creative approaches to social care (art/drama or rec)

D It is recognised through Domain 2 of Coru's framework of proficiencies, which in turn feeds into the curriculum.

E It varies from one institute to the next depending on the culture and on how well the Course Board/Social care degree Programme review staff are rooted in Sector experience and social care specific education and not drawn for other departments for HR reasons.

F It is taught in our creative practice modules.

G Creativity is implicit in much of the social care curriculum rather than explicitly taught and assessed. Where it does feature in module outcomes it is typically within arts based or creative studies modules solely.

Q7. What forms of teaching encourage/enable students in social care education to be creative? What types of creativity are being encouraged in these forms of teaching?

A Supporting the student to be creative, reflect on their creativity, in some cases, to let go and free flow to reactivate ‘the inner child’, to be confident in their creativity, to offer opportunities whereby the students enter into creative collaborations with people we support in the community.

B Personality Detachment and Playfulness –

C See table

| <i>Forms of teaching encourage enable creativity</i> | | <i>Teaching Activities – in Art Studio prior to Covid 19</i> |
|--|--|---|
| | <i>Experimentation</i> | <i>Fun and engaging activities – introducing creativity on many levels</i> |
| | <i>Non-judgmental of art work – not assessed</i> | <i>Assessment based on engagement and knowledge</i> |
| | <i>No external standards applied – unlike art education</i> | <i>Assessment based on engagement and knowledge</i> |
| | <i>Autonomy, freedom and choice</i> | <i>Fun and engaging activities – introducing creativity on many levels</i> |
| | <i>Rewarding effort</i> | <i>Assessment based on engagement and knowledge</i> |
| | <i>Valuing risk</i> | <i>Fun and engaging activities – introducing creativity on many levels</i> |
| | <i>Encouragement</i> | <i>Fun and engaging activities – introducing creativity on many levels</i> |
| | <i>Asking reflective questions</i> | <i>Discussion forums – personal reflection</i> |
| | <i>Fostering belonging and common goals</i> | <i>Fun and engaging activities – introducing creativity on many levels</i> |
| | <i>Theory development – moving from simplistic lay language to complex and abstract ideas</i> <i>Positioning creativity as a normal drive and valuable tool in SC</i> | <i>Lectures and discussion</i> - <i>creativity theory and children’s creative development</i> - <i>The nature of reality</i> - <i>Signs and meaning making</i> |
| | <i>Peer interaction</i> | <i>Fun and engaging activities</i> |
| | <i>Envision future roles – SCW encouraging other people creativity</i> | <i>Lectures and discussion & Fun and engaging activities</i> |
| | <i>Teamwork – students work together but I don’t believe in group marks (counterproductive!)</i> | <i>Teaching each other skills and doing activities with external groups (disability)</i> |
| | <i>Lecturer position: Student novice to Partnership approach with lecturer over the three years</i> | <i>Moving from high support to low support as students’ progress over time</i> |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <i>Types of creativity encouraged in these forms of teaching (also know about)</i> | <i>Personal creativity Recognising everyday creativity as valuable</i> | |
| | <i>Creativity in groups. Ideas development from groups</i> | |
| | <i>Professional role of creativity</i> | |
| | <i>Creativity as a way to foster engagement in SC relationships</i> | |
| | <i>Creativity as healing and cathartic</i> | |
| | <i>Creativity as therapy</i> | |
| | <i>Creativity as an mode of expression for unconscious – tool for reflection and contemplation</i> | |

D *Personally, I tend to attempt a transformational approach, based on an andragogical understanding of education, whereby the students are active agents in their own learning.*

E *Knowledge of the relationship building and diverse communicative aspects of creative engagement. When this is established through theoretical and reflective means, then individual creative approaches and their potential to support clients can then be explored.*

F *Outdoor play*

- *Working with Nature*
- *Applied Drama Practice*
- *Art and Crafts*
- *Spectacle and Performance*
- *Creative Writing*
- *Storytelling*
- *Active learning in tutorial groups. Eg: Using lego for reflective practice, kite building for team-working, model-building for concept teaching.*
- *Assessment strategies. Eg: Designing interactive installations for exhibitions, story trails, journaling (e-portfolios).*
- *Working with invited artists, members of the local community. Eg: Making arpilleras, learning craft traditions.*

G *Experiential forms of learning and interactive teaching approaches stimulate students interest and curiosity in thinking and being creative. Collaborative ways of working especially projects that directly involve service users make use of creative forms of learning and teaching. In these situations, creativity in daily life is promoted underpinned by theories of creativity that place importance on the creative person and creativity as a process.*

H *Applied practice/ Interdisciplinary education/ cross-disciplinary education/ teamwork.*

Q8 What contexts/conditions/situations for learning encourage/enable students to use and demonstrate their creativity in social care education?

A *Contexts for reflection, self-reflection, role play, case studies through drama, Co collaboration, co-production, communal creativity from design, process and production with outside groups, people we support
Conditions focus on the creativity of the relationality, nexus of social care*

Supporting the students to step into the unknown of how they can use their creativity in social care.

B *Safe learning environment to explore one's own learning and development*

Diad and Triad Role Places of practitioner, service user and observer to help people explore applications of theory to practice

Reflective journals and portfolio work which captures a learners experiential learning within modules

Work placement settings where direct work with individuals and groups is possible and the student has been provided with the autonomy to plan, deliver and evaluate short term actions e.g. arts based workshops, drama based workshops, music based workshops etc.

C *In AIT we run (in non-Covid times) groups with external organisations and this helps the students to overcome fears and realise their own and the client's creativity potential.*

They also see and do creative work on placement.

D *I try to provide as many contexts as possible for the students. Most years the students engage with service users, mostly adults with learning difficulties, in the development and production of a show of some kind – usually an original drama or shadow puppet piece. During the pandemic, we have used tools such as Padlet to exchange and display artworks and have also performed a 'criminal trial' roleplay online.*

E *Opportunities are explored through theoretical contexts in lecture based alongside case study/scenario-based analysis whose outcomes are explored in tutorials and during practical based practice. Placement settings and their assessment learning outcomes are orientated towards students' reflection in, on and for creative engagement in workplace scenarios*

F *Creating and maintaining a culturally safe space.*

- *Humour.*
- *Applauding 'mistakes'.*
- *Welcoming questions.*
- *TIME!*
- *And time for reflection.*
- *A physical environment conducive to creative practices.*
- *A well-resourced space.*
- *A willingness to participate.*
- *Work done on valuing of creativity, nurturing their creativity and knowledge of creativity, then moving to developing their skills of facilitation.*

G *I would say those contexts that focus on the self-development of the student practitioner and creative approaches to engaging and communicating with service users as well as direct work with service users are opportunities for social care students to use their creativity in social care education.*

H *Work placement/ group-based learning/authentic contexts which reflect the content being disseminated (e.g., theatre)/ guided discovery versus didactic teaching processes/ problem-based learning tools.*

Q9 What factors/conditions inhibit students' creativity in social care education?

A *Lack of confidence, I can't do that*

Afraid to let go,

Lived experiences

Self-image media obsessed culture of being perfect

Immersed in collaborative creative work offers an opportunity for inhibitions, fears, worries about confidence to dissipate, and for confidence in self to be developed.

B

- *Poor quality placement settings where students are shadowing staff but are not being provided with opportunities to work directly with service users.*
- *Academic assessment schedule and the lack of integration across modules to enable the application of theory to practice using creative approaches.*

C *They link creativity to drawing and once this is addressed they are freed up to engage. More students [able to] do lots of different types of creative work outside (make up, music, acting, baking, tattoos, hair, fashion...) and pointing out how valuable that is, helps.*

D *Anxiety and lack of confidence.*

E *Lectures who do not value it pivotal role in social care through lack of social care work experience or attitudes that deem creative engagement as an ancillary practice.*

F *Poor teaching, lack of confidence (teacher and student) and a deficit of all of the above.*

G *Barriers to students being creative range from not believing or identify as a creative individual to not recognising creativity as an essential trait of being an effective social care worker. Broadly speaking students do not prioritise creativity high on their list and often view it as an add-on in their studies while on other occasions creativity holds very little or no value for the student (this is a rare occurrence). Some students are very image conscious especially the younger ones and preoccupied by how they 'look' and come across to their peers and fixated on 'getting it right'. So, self-consciousness and difficulty identifying as a creative individual as well as pedestrian ways of thinking and doing things are the main inhibitors from my experience of teaching social care students.*

H *Didactic teaching methods/ over-emphasis on skills and techniques/ an absence of interaction with fellow learners/ Over-emphasis on long term goals*

Q10. How is students' creativity in social care education assessed? What types of assessment work best and what sort of criteria are used?

A *Assessed by a combination of practice work and theoretical background.*

B *Creative Interpretation Commitment and Critique*

- *The student exhibits own opinions and demonstrates evidence of independent learning.*
- *The work uses imagination and creativity, is original and unique.*
- *The student makes connections to theory, prior learning, and the world around them.*

The student exhibits self-confidence in his or her portfolio or assessment work.

The student critically reflects on their personal creative journey, their challenges and evidence of self-realizations because of engaging in the creative process.

Theoretical Reflective Practice

The student can demonstrate clear links between theory to practice

The student can demonstrate ability to modify creative activities to support a broad range of client groups e.g. children, people with disabilities, elderly population.

The student can demonstrate understanding of how group dynamics and the environment can impact on the creative process.

The student can set personal goals for their ongoing professional learning and development.

The student communicates perseverance, internal motivation and honesty in their engagement with other students or services users during practice placements

C *CA and Portfolio of work (artwork not assessed)*

Covid has now changed that to forums and discussion with lots of research

D *We engage in a mix of whole class, group and individual projects, along with participatory workshops, to expose the students to as wide a range of learning contexts as possible. Assessment criteria include participation, teamwork, initiative and finding a creative solution across several group projects. For individual projects the rubric is based on Creative solution, analysis, content, evidence and presentation.*

E *Case Study analysis, scenario/ hypothetical-based creative intervention design, Peer 'tested' practices, Peer presentations, reflective practice on group creative engagement.*

F

- *Assessment for learning works best.*
- *Formative assessments with feedback on processes.*
- *Assessments that mirror what is being taught.*
- *When students are offered a choice of assessments.*

G *Group work and portfolio type assessments work best in the assessment of students' creativity where the focus is on evidence of growth in the student's thinking and ways of relating to others as well as the development of interpersonal skills and creative methods of communicating with others.*

Where the focus is the self-development of the social care student and designing and planning creative interventions, students are directly assessed on their ability to critically evaluate their own creativity and creative practice. Creativity is also assessed through the documentation of creative practice/direct engagement in creative workshops which requires students to use varied and stimulating imagery, photography and graphic material to support the record of workshops. In addition, the ability to reflect and think deeply and evaluate the impact of artistic processes on own thinking about creativity and other key topics and issues in social care allows for the assessment of creativity in social care education.

H *Creativity is assessed independently, and creative thinking processes underpin most teaching situations/ continuous assessment receives emphasis/ criteria include knowledge and understanding/originality of thought, level of detail and presentations.*