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Personal development modules making a positive difference to learners and their clients

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Social care lecturing staff at Ireland's Limerick Institute of Technology have devised a personal development curriculum and pedagogy for social care learners for each year of their study. This integrated model can be traced back to elements of psychology, sociology, and philosophy. The module aims to equip social care learners to work enabling adults and children in a range of social care settings, who are sometimes marginalized and vulnerable, to be empowered to recognize their own potential equivalent to how social care learners recognize theirs during their engagement with the personal development modules.

Personal development is often a transformative process within the relationship dyad between lecturer and learner who co-create this pedagogical learning space. A person-centered methodology is at the heart of this teaching. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness and relevance of this module for social care work graduates. The purpose of the research is to discover if personal development provides beneficial learning from the perspective of social care work graduates and their in-service supervisors. Engagement with new ideas and research findings throughout my Ph.D. study will facilitate curriculum evaluation and change if necessary.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: Stems from an Interpretive/constructivist qualitative case study research design. Preliminary findings from a pilot study outline learners'

positive experiences both professionally and personally with the module.

Conclusions: From the pilot study suggest continuing the study and recommendations to date advise continuing with interviews and solicited diaries but not focus groups.

Biography

Geraldine is a Founder and PI for all research projects under ASCEND's research group. ASCEND (Applied Social Care Education and practice in New Directions) at Limerick Institute of Technology, Ireland. Prior to taking up her lecturing and research post in 2013, she worked as a Social Care Worker with vulnerable families, young people in residential care, young people in foster care, young people on the cusp of coming in to care, young people involved with the justice system, mental health, and homeless services. Her current research interests are attachment and relationships, Marte Meo therapy, vulnerable people and Personal development for Social Care Learners. She has spoken and published nationally and internationally on these topics. She sits on a research panel for the Ombudsman for Children's Office, a SIG examining the ethics of young peoples' participation in research and the Limerick Citywide Child and Youth Forum.

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