Relational aspects of becoming a social care worker

Presentation is drawn from doctoral research completed with ATU Sligo

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INSPIRING FUTURES

The study

Qualitative exploration of placement-based symbolic growth experiences that caused identity change for SCW students

Rooted in socio-phenomenology (Schütz, 1932/1972)

which contends that our knowledge and worldview is relative to the *lifeworld* we inhabit

Lifeworld

➔ interpretative meaning system

➔ manifested in our conscious actions

➔ socio-philosophical cognitive framework developed through through lived experiences with others from a lifeworld to which we want to belong

3 Objectives

1. Identify the placement-based symbolic growth experiences participants associated with their sense of becoming a SCWer.

2. Infer socio-cultural narratives held within individual experiences of ontological change.

3. Ascertain social infrastructures and pedagogically rich activities which 'hooked' or 'rebuffed' participants' sense of becoming a SCWer

SOCIO–POLITICAL Context

Limited research into SCW PBL

Critical socio-political juncture

Who & what

- 13 social care students, registered in 4 colleges providing SCW education - (anthropological sample Mead, 1953)

- Semi-longitudinal – 2 academic years - 2014-2016

- Critical event narrative research (Mertova and Webster, 2020)

- Thematic socio-linguistic interviews (Labov and Waletzky, 1967)

- Ethical approval – ATU Sligo REC, and reviewed by each of the colleges were participants studied

Narrative typologies

1. Individual becoming narratives

   - Enculturation

   - Disentanglement

2. Collective (re)generation narratives

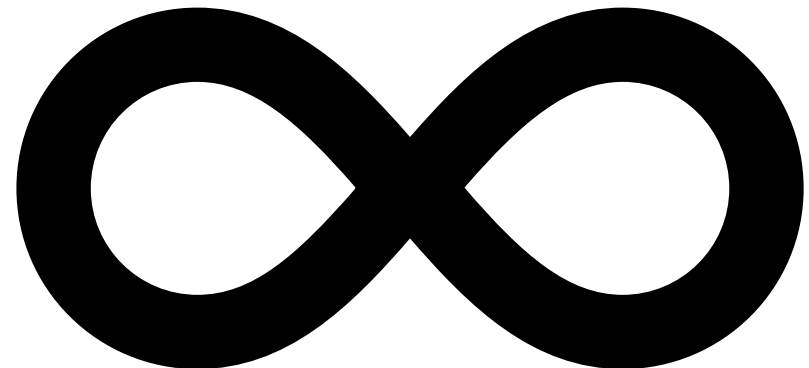   - Co-participation

   - Inhibited participation

Enculturation narrative

Disentanglement narrative

- Person-centred practice

- Administrative tasks

- Low interpersonal distance

- No toggle switching

Co-participation & Inhibited participation narratives

- Authentic activity
- Interaction with & guidance from experienced SCWers
- Learner agency

Hooks & rebuffs

Relationship with PE underpinned every symbolic growth experience, social infrastructure, and pedagogical activity (rich or challenging)

Good relationship = PE being interested in progressing the student into the profession via involvement in practice & providing validating & challenging feedback

Relationships were easier formed when learners had a sense of bounded agency

Insights for SCW education

- Immersion in practice

- Students need to hold bounded agency

- Occupational luminaries

Insights for SCW as a profession

- Placement = informal incorporation pathway

- Newcomers need help

- Replenished membership ➔ requires relationship–based practice education

Implications

CORU programme approval & worker registration ➜ influences the role of PE & responsibilities workers have to students

PE ➜ responsibility teaching practice and assessing achievement of a 'safe practice' threshold

Learning relationship

Where to from here