

Session Title: The use of film in Social Work education

Conference Theme: Ethical issues: teaching ethics and being ethical teachers

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Language: English

Background

The Film club originated as a small research project developed by staff in the Department of Social Work at Royal Holloway University of London with the aim to develop students' skills in detecting ethical issues in situations. The project ran between November 2011 and April 2012 with students on the 1st year of the MSc in Social Work selected as participants. Participants were asked to watch 3 selected contemporary films with subject matter related to social work practice, engage in a post film discussion which was facilitated by an experienced social worker and an academic member of staff and comment on their views around social work ethics and values through pre and post film questionnaires. This project was written up and published (*see Brown & Keating, 2015*). The findings from the small study highlighted that contemporary Film can create opportunities to connect abstract ideas with 'real life' situations, assist students to explore ethics in the classroom and also thinking critically about their own social work practice experiences. As the Film club has developed we have sought the involvement of service users and carers in exploring the ethical and practice issues at the evaluative stage.

The Film Club has now become embedded in the curriculum of the MSc in Social Work programme at Royal Holloway University, providing a creative approach to exploring ethics and values in social work practice. We're interested in further exploring the use of film in social work education.

Aims of the session:

- a) To explore how film can be used as a tool to enhance the ethical development of social work students as future practitioners;
- b) To present findings from a pilot study (the Film Club)) to introduce film as a teaching medium in social work education; and
- c) To provide social work educators a forum in which to explore film as a teaching medium to increase the skills and abilities of social work students to detect ethical dimensions in practice situations.

Outline of the session:

- A brief presentation, using PowerPoint, on film as a teaching medium and the findings from the Film Club pilot,
- A discussion forum where participants will have an opportunity to share their experiences and views on the use of film as a teaching medium in social work education,
- An interactive exercise where participants will be shown a clip from one of the films used in the Film Club with a view to drawing out ethical issues for discussion, and
- A summative discussion to explore how ideas and insights from the session can be used to embed film as a teaching medium in social work curricula and how we could also engage service users and carers in this process.

Relevance to the conference theme:

The proposed workshop fits with the conference themes and therefore will be of benefit to delegates. For example, it fits with the conference aim to enhance ethical development of social workers in the future by demonstrating how this was achieved in the Film Club study. In particular we believe it offers an opportunity for participants to explore prospects, methodology, research and innovative practice to increase students' skill and ability to detect ethical issues in situations. We wish to facilitate a discussion on the usefulness of service user and carer involvement in the Film Club.

Brown, S. & Keating, F. (2015) The Film Club: Reflections on the Use of Contemporary Film to Teach Ethics to Social Work Students, *Ethics and Social Welfare*, 9(3):312-321. DOI: [10.1080/17496535.2015.1024155](https://doi.org/10.1080/17496535.2015.1024155)