SOLSTICE & CLT Conference 2017

Session 19 - B005
14.50 – 15.20
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The impact/evaluation of a course related holocaust visit (and teaching) on University students' social relational skills
- **Life Skills Model** (WGO, 1993; Bussu et al. 2016) and **Emotional Intelligence** (Mayer & Salovoy, 1993)

- The concept of **Emotional Intelligence (EI)** was introduced by Mayer & Salovoy (1993) in the early 1990's who define it as a type of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and other's emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions.
Aims of our action-research project

- The primary aim was to evaluate the impact of a visit to Holocaust-related sites on students (BSc (Hons) Psychosocial Analysis of Offending Behaviour) emotional and social relational life skills.

- The secondary aim of the research was to explore how the educational experience could be further enhanced for future cohorts of students.

- The third, this research is a good opportunity to improve curricular strategies to support students on this pedagogical experience but at the same to implement new best practices for Holocaust education. In particular to explore the impact of outdoor experiences on student’ active learning and students satisfaction (Ben-Peretz, 2015; Gallant & Hartman, 2001).
Outdoor learning

- In ‘outdoor learning’, participants learn through what they do, through what they encounter and through what they discover. Participants learn about the outdoors, themselves and each other, while also learning outdoor skills. Active learning readily develops the learning skills of enquiry, experiment, feedback, reflection, review and cooperative learning (Nicol, 2003; Dillo, Rickinson, Teamey, & Morris, 2006; Stidder & Haasner, 2007)
Pilot experience phases

Stage 1: Pedagogical Experience

– Action 1) Two Lectures on Holocaust (Historical Introduction of Nazism ideology and Eugenics; multifactor and interdisciplinary explanation. Case study: Oskar Schindler (January 2017).

– Action 2) Visiting Holocaust-related Sites (Visiting Holocaust-related sites 25/29 January 2017)

– First day: walk through what used to be Jewish Ghetto in Krakow. Visit the Visiting Oskar Schindler’s Factory Museum.

– Second day: Visiting Holocaust-related sites: Stopping at several sites, the students read testimonies of victim, complementary information about the site, or to commemorate the Holocaust victims
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Methodology

A mixed method action research approach was adopted comprising:

– • “Quick emotional intelligence self-assessment” questionnaire to student participants (quantitative pre & post visit). The questionnaire comprises scores for 4 subscales (emotional awareness, emotional management, social-emotional awareness, relationship management)

– • A student focus group to explore the emotional & social impact of the visit

– • Questionnaires to lecturers involved in the visit to explore their personal views, and reflections on strategies to improve the educational experience for future cohorts of students.
Stage 2: Research Project implementation

- Planning, implementation and evaluation of emotional and social relational life skills on year 3 PAOB students (experimental participants in January 2017).
- **Action 1)** Pre: first administration scale “Quick emotional intelligence self-assessment” (baseline)
- **Action 2)** Post: focus group with students
- **Action 3)** Post: lecturer questionnaire administrated on outdoor e-learning experience
- **Action 4)** Post: second administration scales “Quick emotional intelligence self-assessment”
Pilot experience phases

Stage 3: Data analysis:

Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire: exploratory analysis (descriptive statistics & t-test) to inform the qualitative element of data analysis.

Focus groups: We used the content analysis, very useful to implement the triangulation, powerful technique that facilitates validation of data through cross verification from two or more sources (mix methods). In particular, it refers to the application and combination of several research methods in the study of the same phenomenon.
Procedure & data analysis

1) Content analysis of focus group
The focus groups with participants were moderated by two researchers; two observers were also present to take note of group dynamics. They lasted about 2.5 hours for both research and training purposes (Bazemore, 1998; Bazemore and Schiff, 2004).

2) Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire: exploratory analysis (descriptive statistics & t-test) via SPSS (Version 23)
Sample

– 20 third year students from BA (Hons) Psychosocial Analysis of Offending Behaviour (POAB) who participated to the Visiting Holocaust-related sites. One form of purposive sampling is ‘theoretical sampling’, developed from the ‘grounded theory’ approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

– 5 lecturers from PAOB completed the questionnaire
Main results: “Quick emotional intelligence self-assessment”

- 4 subscales (Emotional Awareness; Emotional Management; Social Emotional Awareness; & Relationship Management)

- Scores of 0-24 (Area for enrichment); 25-34 (Effective functioning); 35-40 (Enhanced skills)

- 2 cross-sectional studies (pre & post visit) to inform Longitudinal study
Main results: “Quick emotional intelligence self-assessment”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administration</th>
<th>EI Scale Scores</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-visit</td>
<td>Emotional Awareness</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26.00</td>
<td>4.32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-visit</td>
<td>Emotional Awareness</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25.75</td>
<td>6.23</td>
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<td>Emotional Management</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>25.06</td>
<td>4.57</td>
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<td>28.38</td>
<td>5.66</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-visit</td>
<td>Social Emotional Awareness</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32.31</td>
<td>3.68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-visit</td>
<td>Social Emotional Awareness</td>
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<td>31.38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-visit</td>
<td>Relationship Management</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>31.31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Post-visit</td>
<td>Relationship Management</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28.25</td>
<td>6.52</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Students scored highest in scales related to group dynamics (“Social Emotional Awareness” & “Relationship Management”) compared to scales related to personal emotion awareness & management (“Emotional Awareness” & “Emotional Management”)

A decline in Relationship Management Scale score

No meaningful statistical analysis given small numbers, with

- strong correlations between scores pre & post visit & no significant differences between scales (paired samples t-test)
Main results: Lectures questionnaires

1. Personal experience
   • Do you think that introducing students to the Holocaust via lectures is beneficial? Please explain your views.
   • Do you feel this experience has impacted on you personally? If so, how?
   • Do you think that this experience has impacted on your academic role? If so, how?

2. Evaluation of outdoor experience
   • How did students feel about visiting Holocaust-related sites?
   • What information/contents do you think students get you during this experience?
   • What do you like best about this pedagogical experience?
   • What student’s life skills (emotional and/or social skills) do you think this experience can develop?
Main results: Lectures questionnaires

3. Improvement/changes

• Suppose that next year you have the opportunity to organize this pedagogical experience, what would be useful to introduce/provide for your colleagues to support their learning experience?

• What factors do you consider important to evaluate a pedagogical experience for undergraduate students?

• Have you final suggestions and comments (personally and/or related to the student experience)?
Amazing experience!!

“Specifically, it has also been great for building my relationship with the students I work with”
I think this experience can develop understanding and empathy, concern for other people. I think it can also help students to think about how to relate to and communicate with different groups, marginal groups and their role in ending discrimination and unfairness. I think it’s also important to teach students respect for others, how to manage emotions and to understand appropriate responses to different situations.

Being there and being able to experience the atmosphere and the environment is the best opportunity to learn. Learning from experience has far of an impact than just learning about an experience.

The pedagogical experience, in my personal opinion, needs to create challenges for our students in a controlled setting facilitated by the trainer/teacher.
Key Statements emerging from each question

- **Question 1** - It is a good idea to introduce understanding for the Holocaust prior to the visit.
- **Question 2** - It helped staff to reflect and think empathetically about the consequences of the Holocaust.
- **Question 3** - To an extent, the visit had an impact on staff’s academic roles because it built relationships with the students.
- **Question 4** - The reaction of the student’s visiting Auschwitz had a profound effect on their experience.
- **Question 5** - The students and staff received quality information from the tour guides, who were local people and they know Auschwitz well.
Key Statements emerging from each question

– **Question 6** - Experiencing the atmosphere and environment, as well as the space to reflect, made the trip an important pedagogical experience.

– **Question 7** - The life skills students developed included tolerance, understanding and empathy for different marginalised groups.

– **Question 8** - Recommendations to enhance the pedagogical experience include, provide a PowerPoint prior to the visit offering tips and advice about the trip; arrange for former inmates of Auschwitz to give a talk about their experiences; develop a tool to monitor staff experiences of the visits, and provide a brief overview on the morning of the visit as a reminder of what to expect.

– **Question 9** - Evaluating students experiences could be actioned by developing a longitudinal evaluation of the experiences for students and how it impacts on their lives.

– **Question 10** - It was a brilliant experience and one member of staff said they were proud of the students.
Some strategies for next year...

“Could be useful introduce some learning experiences outdoor from first year, with specific goals/ aims; To involved students in research project link to outdoor learning experiences and not only like a sample; Furthermore, could be interesting to collect training needs and requirements of students before to organize “new formative visits”.

“I think that this is a brilliant trip. The guide on the Auschwitz and Birkenau tour said that Auschwitz survivors occasionally give talks to visitors, but I presume this isn’t very often and I don’t know how much it would cost, but it might be worth considering if possible.

“to involve PAOB students to plan new learning outdoor activities. It is very important to collect training needs of students. Sharing together an handbook of best practices and to promote a satisfactory learning experiences”
Focus Group Discussion Guide

Introduction of research goals. Reciprocal presentation (Moderators and participants)

1. Opening questions: What did you think of Holocaust?

2. Introductory Question: How did you feel about visiting Holocaust-related sites? What information/contents did you get during this experience? What do you like best about this pedagogical experience?

3. Transition Questions: What reflections did you do after this experience? (Could you share reflections, examples, choices etc.) What did you learn about Holocaust? What did you learn about yourself?

4. Key Questions: Suppose that next year you have the opportunity to organize a next pedagogical experience to understand Holocaust phenomenon, what could be useful to introduce/provide for your colleagues to support their learning experience? Could you to evaluate your satisfaction? What factors do you consider important to evaluate a pedagogical experience for undergraduate students? How you consider to participate to research project for you learning?

5. Ending Questions: Have you final suggestions for your teachers and comments? Have we missed anything important on this discussion? Final reformulations of the most important aspect/Thanks for participation (Kruger, 2002)
Focus group

Through the Focus group audio-recorded we collected students’ satisfaction; personal reflections and best practices to improve the future “outdoor formative experiences.”

- We have chosen an interpretative approach to reconstruct the “implicit theories” (Ross, 1989) of the participants in social science research, which can emerge through semi-structured focus group interviewing. Thus, we followed the "Grounded Theory" methodology (Marshall and Rossman, 1995; Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 1995; Henwood and Pidgeon, 1992), in which, according to Charmaz’s (2006) constructivist perspective, the researcher is a "co-constructor of meaning" who tries to avoid constraining the participants’ answers within predefined categories.

We have implemented “triangulation”, powerful technique that facilitates validation of data through cross verification from two or more sources (quantitative and qualitative data).
Main results

What did you think of Holocaust?

For our student’s it was difficult to understand how it was possible to determine this «terrible tragedy»

≤ I just think it makes you look at today’s world, and it makes you think that we need to put more things in place to stop it ever happening again, like obviously we’ve got dictators (...) just everyone it makes you just take a step back of the world and appreciate what you’ve got and just think you actually need to take a step in doing something to counteract just anything basically, like even if it’s means just something as simple as actually voting in the referendum it just makes you think that every little voice does matter ≥

≤ Like the repression of so many people meant like they felt that they didn’t have a voice, and that even in numbers they like if they upraised they could have like ( ) it just shows you the power of repression and that it actually knocks you down as a person like emotionally wise, just no one actually had the strength that way to rise up, it’s not just talking about it.
Emotional experience

1. Useful to develop «social consciousness», to prevent new crimes against people
2. The student’s needed time (in solitude) to reflect about their personal experience.

Student 4: “It felt for me like at that time and like when we were there it felt surreal, like it didn’t happen, but then it was after like when I got back to the hotel that it hit me and I was like, I just felt like depressed, and I was like just going through my head everything what we heard, it was just like how people lived like that, because when we were walking through it was freezing, and we had coats and scarves on, and then to think people were just in their pajamas and how do you survive?”

“I still can’t look back at the pictures that I’ve took, it’s just almost ↑ traumatizing in a way, I don’t want to look back at the pictures like force myself to think about it, I’ve just sort of since I’ve got back I’ve just sort of trying to forget about it because I don’t want to force myself to actually consider it all again.”
Sensorial experience

1. Promote «sensorial experience» to develop active learning processes

- “(...) when you’re actually there in your coat in the middle of it, and you’re just in this room that smells, and there’s this mud on the ground, and you think some people were even sleeping in the mud you just don’t get that from reading that you have to be there to see it, to properly able to empathise with it”
Develop life skills

Develop:
1. Interpersonal life skills
2. Empathy and tolerance
3. Self-awareness and managing emotions
4. Communication among students

I think it was more important for the interpersonal skills because I feel like the historical part you could just read about, in fact on the internet you’re not going to gain the skills from just reading about it, you have to go and experience it, and that’s the part that’s going to help you develop the skills, so I think that’s more important than just learning about the historical facts.

I think until you go there and experience it like walking round and that you don’t realise how much of an impact it will have had on like society today, you know like the changes that we’ve made since(…)

I think definitely the listening and definitely the empathy because I feel when we were all walking round no one was talking, everyone was just so focused just completely listening and empathy I think that’s just obvious like it forced everyone to just stand and think about what it was like (…)

Consolidate the relation among students and lecturers

I think really because like the lecturers weren’t responsible for us, it was sort of like we were all colleagues rather than (. ) like obviously we did look up to you ( h ), but you know what I mean like it was like we were all sort of equal type of thing. I don’t know, I think that built relationships ( … )

And you get to know the lecturers as well like before this obviously you were kind of like just taught us, we kind of saw you as more of a professional way, but obviously when you go to [ Country ] … we saw you more like, you could have a proper conversation with them, have a laugh
Consolidate the relation among students: promote a group identity

I think it would help group cohesion to do it earlier on really.

I feel like we all know each other a little bit better (h), we shared such an emotional experience.

Brought us closer, I don’t think I’ve ever spoke to you, but then people who you don’t really like speak to, like do things together because you’re all like.
Experience is not what happens to a man; it is what a man does with what happens to him. Aldous Huxley

I think for me the only thing that I would change is you know the [Tour Name] ... I feel like we might have enjoyed it more and got more out of it if we was allowed to go around by ourselves you know instead of having the tour guide, we were really moving quite quickly and there was no time to like stop and take pictures, and actually read the things, because the lady was just sort of you felt a bit rushed around.

Promote more «students personal moment» during Visiting Holocaust-related sites:

«Give time to students» to support their «Self-narration»
Implication and conclusions

– A “springboard” for further research & internal funding (as pilot study)
– In the future aim to extend to new cohorts & include staff working on the sites
– Given positive outcomes, the aim is to incorporate such emotional experiences into the curriculum in other courses in Applied Health & Social Care
– Staff & students clearly valued the experience as a mechanism to enhance individual emotional experiences & learning; and to create a “group identity”
Perspectives

– Next year to prepare students before the visiting to Holocaust-related sites we want use
– Exploring how such experiences can enhance student learning with a sample and control group.
– It is envisaged that this project will inform an application for funding to extend this project to subsequent cohorts of students, and involve collaboration with staff working in Holocaust-related sites.
Any Final Comments or Questions?

Thank you!
Anna, Michael and Peter

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