

How can
dramatherapy allow
me to understand
social work essay



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Proposal title" Listening to the inner voice; how can Dramatherapy allow me to understand the client's world?" Background to the enquiry Growing up with two teachers for parents certainly had its drawbacks but also it allowed me the opportunity to experience my mother's job. Some of my fondest childhood memories are about the time I spent with my mother at a local residential home helping disabled adults learn how to cook. I experienced the student's achievement of creating something as simple as a pizza, the joy of eating and enjoying it. I knew from a young age I wanted to make a difference in the lives of those who needed help from others. Whilst studying for my degree I took on a community project and decided to work with adults with disabilities at a further education college. I was asked to spend a day running Drama workshops as an enrichment program to build upon the student's self-confidence and communication with others in their class. It was these life experiences that led me to Dramatherapy in the first place. I was amazed at the power of the Drama and how the students who had started the sessions unable to make eye contact with each other, reluctant to work together and seemingly lost in their own world slowly came out of their shells and interacted with each other. I am reminded of a documentary I saw about Carly Fleischmann, described as " a severely autistic 14-year-old who, unable to speak, was once written off as mentally deficient". Her parents never gave up on finding a way of communicating with her and spent a great deal of money on an array of therapies since the moment she was diagnosed. Carly one day when she was 11 felt unwell and was unable to communicate this to her therapists so she ran to a computer and started to type asking for help. The therapists were amazed and although it took some time for Carly to communicate in this way to others including her

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parents she is now able to write about how her Autism makes her feel, she has even written a novel called 'The Elephant Princess'. There are the skeptics who aren't quite convinced that the words are coming from Carly but something that rings in my ears is Carly's advice to others "I think the only thing I can say is don't give up. Your inner voice will find its way out. Mine did." Whether Carly has written these words or not it is for this reason I would like to base my research on gaining a better understanding of others on their terms. Context of the enquiry I am hoping to complete my study in a special needs secondary school based in London for students aged between 11 - 19 years old currently catering for 150 students who have a wide range of needs including learning, communication, behavioural, emotional, physical, medical, sensory and social difficulties. All students need a statement of educational needs for admission to the school. The school offers a wide range of provision for the students learning and well being and this was thoroughly praised throughout the last OFSTED inspection in November 2010. The inspectors picked up that the "staff make imaginative use of practical activities, often involving drama techniques, to enhance learning." Showing that the students who have not have Dramatherapy will come with some understanding of Drama techniques. In my placement experiences this knowledge has often helped the client become more open to being involved in the processes of Dramatherapy. Main research questions The more I have read around this topic the more interested I have become in finding a way to understand those that have historically been misunderstood. It wasn't all that long ago that anyone who was seen as disabled both mentally and physically were institutionalised and forgotten about. History has called these people, the 'village idiot' or 'mad', The <https://assignbuster.com/how-can-dramatherapy-allow-me-to-understand-social-work-essay/>

Mentally Deficient act of 1913 classified people into four categories; idiots, imbeciles, feeble-minded persons and moral imbeciles and with that locked them in 'colonies' so they couldn't spread their 'deficiency' to the rest of society. It wasn't until 1990 when 'The National Health Service and Community Care Act' came into effect that disabled people were recognised as having a right to be an equal part of society, with access to the required support. I hold some understand that there is fear attached to things that are not easily understood and it was impossible to understand the disabilities in a time of minor scientific success but attitudes now are not those dramatically different in some cultures and generations and I would like the opportunity to investigate this further. I have also thought about how the Dramatherapy can empower the person and not the disability. This study puts the client at the centre of it. Words like understanding, empathy and empowerment will be at the centre of the research. Methodological considerations Throughout the research I will be using a qualitative approach. I support the idea that this method in its very fundamental nature aims to gather an in-depth understanding of human behaviour. I will also explore a phenomenological response to the lived experience for this client group and this idea in turn brings up its own questions, for example; as an 'able bodied' person can I truly understand the clients inner world? This supports my own personal process of becoming a Dramatherapist as before being able to help clients to understand I must first learn to understand the client myself." One of the most enthralling but daunting tasks facing a phenomenological researcher is to remain both open and faithful to the thing observed while investigating a phenomenon with which, by definition, she is deeply engaged." (Lia Zografou 2012) Through all these considerations the <https://assignbuster.com/how-can-dramatherapy-allow-me-to-understand-social-work-essay/>

very nature of the Dramatherapy tools support the collection of data from storytelling to use of metaphor and containment of sessions. My methods for collecting 'data' will therefore be; Observation in the form of written session notes and emergent themes from sessions and perhaps discussed during supervision. Interviews (face-to-face, semi structured), this will form assessments of the clients and their suitability for Dramatherapy and primary needs. I will talk to their teachers as well as the clients themselves. Written materials to include journals and creative work (if consent is given their may also be photograph of the client's creative work) My own personal reflections from the sessions Another method I may choose to include may be a questionnaire to ascertain prior understanding of the client's behaviors and mannerisms before the sessions start, at the middle of the therapeutic journey and when the sessions have ended - these questionnaires will seek to establish both client opinion and where appropriate opinion of carers/staff possibly even parental attitudes could be measured. The questionnaire will look at qualitative responses such as thoughts and feelings rather than a quantitative scale. Also I feel that working with a group of clients rather than 1: 1 could be very important. There will be more to consider such as group dynamics and role taking but I feel the data collected will be richer at the end of the sessions. The very nature of the methodological considerations means that " qualitative research is an emergent process, fluid and unpredictable. It serves open ended questions and involves researcher and participant alike in an experience which honours and validates subjective immersion and engagement. (Lia Zografou 2012) Ethical considerations As this study will put the clients at the centre of it I will need to make sure that throughout the research I have the client in mind. I will seek to follow <https://assignbuster.com/how-can-dramatherapy-allow-me-to-understand-social-work-essay/>

BADTh's code of practice (September 2005), The HPCP's standards of conduct, performance and ethics (August 2012) and the University of Roehampton's guidelines as laid out in the 2012/2013 Clinical Placement handbook for part time students. With this in mind I will need to seek permission from the school and parent/carer of the clients to take part in both the Dramatherapy sessions and also the action based research. All parties need to be made aware that the work done in sessions may contribute to the study I am undertaking and that this is a study into my own practice within this field and not a judgement on the clients themselves or the placement. There is also the understanding of the clients themselves to take into consideration and I will need work carefully with an experienced Dramatherapist, whether it is my placement manager or supervisor, to ensure that this happens. Within this I will be looking to get informed consent which will be in the shape of a consent form. I will also need to make it clear that at any stage the client has the right to withdraw from the study or if they are at all unhappy with anything throughout the study there is a complaint procedure they can follow. All the clients' materials from sessions will be kept securely and made available to clients throughout the session time. Then there is the issue of client confidentiality. Client names and institutional names will be removed from all paperwork, notes or products from the therapy sessions and permission will be sought if any of the previously mentioned materials are used in my final draft of the dissertation.

Preliminary literature review
Projected conclusions
Clark Moustakas states that ". . . the only way I can truly come to know things and people is to go out to them, to return again and again to them, to immerse myself

completely in what is there before me. Look, see, listen, hear, touch, from <https://assignbuster.com/how-can-dramatherapy-allow-me-to-understand-social-work-essay/>

many angles and perspectives . . . each time freshly so that there will be continual . . . learnings that will connect with each other and with prior perceptions, understandings and future possibilities". (1994, p. 65) I feel the conclusions of this study will be highly subjective. I hope that the therapy empowers the clients in finding and being able to listen to their inner voice and I hope to gain a better understanding of this client group and be able to disseminate the outcome of this understanding openly and honestly so that others may comprehend them also and the fear I mentioned previously may be allayed to continue to make sure that everyone no matter what their race, gender, ability or disability has a place in our ever expanding society.