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# An Evaluation of the Use of Problem Based Learning and Film as a Method of Teaching and Assessment for Social Care Students.

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## **Abstract**

*This paper presents the results of a student evaluation of Problem Based Learning (PBL) and film as a pedagogical tool that is used to help students to experience the challenges, advantages and complexities of working in a social care context. Problem Based Learning is combined with the Hollywood film “Precious” which is used as a case study. The “problem” that students are faced with is to prepare a risk assessment and care plan for their client Precious (age 16) and her son Abdul, mirroring the real world experience and challenges of social care work. This has been evaluated by qualitative questionnaires which explore the student experience of PBL as a pedagogical tool, particularly focusing on advantages and disadvantages of PBL, emotions experienced during PBL, the value of a PBL approach in helping social care students link theory and practice and the students’ skill development and the use of film as a case study.*

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**Keywords:** Social Care Education, Problem Based Learning, Student Evaluation, Teaching and Assessment, Film.

**Mots – clé:** Education Sociale, Apprentissage par Problèmes, Évaluation, L’enseignement et L’évaluation, Film

## Résumé

*Cet article présente les résultats d'une évaluation des élèves d'apprentissage par problèmes (APP) et le film comme un outil pédagogique qui est utilisé pour aider les élèves à découvrir les enjeux, les avantages et les complexités de travailler dans un contexte de prise en charge sociale. D'apprentissage par problèmes est combiné avec le film hollywoodien "Precious" qui est utilisé comme une étude de cas. Le «problème» auquel les étudiants sont confrontés est la préparation d'une évaluation des risques et le plan de soins pour leur client "Precious" (16 ans) et son fils Abdul, reflétant l'expérience concrète ainsi que les défis du travail social. Cela a été évalué par des questionnaires qualitatifs et les résultats donnent un aperçu de l'expérience des étudiants de l'APP comme un outil pédagogique, notamment en mettant l'accent sur les avantages et les inconvénients de PBL, les émotions vécues au cours de PBL, le développement des compétences et l'utilisation du film comme une étude de cas.*

## Introduction

Principles of Professional Practice is a 10 ECTS module taught to Social Care students throughout the B.A Social Care Honours Degree at the Dublin Institute of Technology. The professional role and responsibilities of the social care worker are emphasised throughout this module, whilst students are encouraged to critically analyse the core theoretical frameworks, concepts and legislative instruments that impact upon their practice and development as social care workers in training. In order to prepare students for real world problem solving, students are introduced to Problem Based Learning (PBL) in the second year of their training in the Principles of Professional Practice module. The decision to introduce this method of teaching and assessment on this module dates back to 2010 when a group of lecturers teaching Principles of Professional Practice re-evaluated the delivery of this module. A review of assessment strategies by lecturers, combined with feedback from some supervised placement practice teachers found that some students on the B.A (Honours) Social Care programme were struggling to integrate theory with practice during their supervised placements. Following further discussions and meetings with the Learning Teaching and Technology Centre at the Dublin Institute of Technology, it was decided to integrate a PBL approach to the second

year Principles of Professional Practice module on the B.A (Honours) Social Care Programme. In summary the PBL approach was integrated into the teaching of the second year Principles of Professional Practice module in order to:

- Assist students in linking theory and practice;
- Encourage links between college and social care practice placements;
- Encourage students to access resources and information for practice;
- Promote experience of working in a team;
- Challenge students stereotyping, labelling and making assumptions in practice;
- Promote awareness of legislation, standards and social policies when making assessments and planning interventions;
- Promote leadership and conflict management skills which are key skills required by professional social care practitioners.

In the academic year 2013/2014 Problem Based Learning (PBL) was combined with the Hollywood film “Precious” which was used as a film case study or medium through which second year students were required to complete their PBL project. Students prepared a risk assessment and care plan for 16 year old Precious (the main character in the film) and her new born son Abdul. Student Social Care Workers were required to research, role play and explore the roles of various agencies and professionals in a number of PBL sessions which were facilitated by the lecturers. The assessment and care plan which students completed, combined with an individual written reflection, to constitute the continuous assessment component for this module, constructively aligning the teaching method with the assessment (Biggs, 2003).

While Problem Based Learning seems to have been integrated and evaluated in some disciplines including engineering, science and medicine, this is not the case in social care (social pedagogy). This article discusses the evaluation of PBL as a method of teaching and assessment in social care education and training. In particular it focuses on evaluating the students’ experience of using PBL and film as a pedagogical tool in their development as social care practitioners.

## Problem Based Learning, Social Care and Graduate Attributes

Problem based learning was introduced in the 1960s for medical students at McMaster University in North America and is now used in numerous disciplines including Earth Sciences (Higgs, 2005), Computer Science (O’Kelly, 2005), Engineering (Duffy, Chance & Bowe, 2012), Speech and Language Therapy (2005), Physics (Bowe, 2005), and Social Work (Hartsell and Parker, 2008; Wong & Lam, 2007). Barrows and Tamblyn (1980) found that medical students who experienced PBL rather than memory based learning had a more usable body of knowledge and developed problem solving skills that were relevant to their profession. Similar to the medical profession, problem solving skills are integral to the work of the Social Care Worker. In fact the ability to solve problems is named as a key skill in the HETAC<sup>2</sup> standards for Social Care training in Ireland (HETAC, 2010). Social Care Work is defined by the Irish Association of Social Care Educators as “*a profession committed to the planning and delivery of quality care and other support services for individuals and groups with identified needs*” (Lalor and Share, 2013: 4). In the wider European context Social Care Work is often referred to as Social Pedagogy which means “*working with people in the context in which they live ... it usually means working with people to enhance their self management skills and capacities*” (Hogstram, Nilsson and Hallstedt, 2013: 20). Effective Social Care Work is also based “*on interpersonal relationships which require empathy, strong communication skills, self awareness and an ability to use critical reflection. Teamwork and interdisciplinary work are also considered important elements of effective social care practice*” (Share and Lalor, 2013: 5).

The Dublin Institute of Technology Graduate Attributes document promotes the development of graduates who are engaged, enterprising, enquiry based, effective and expert (DIT, 2013). The skills that Problem based learning fosters link very well with these graduate attributes and also with the recognised skills associated with effective Social Care practice outlined above. A study by Brodie (2011) found that graduates who experience PBL have better teamwork, self-directed learning, communication, problem solving, theoretical and technical skills than their counterparts. Problem based learning also facilitates different learning styles (Kolmos and Holgard, 2008), deep engagement (HEA, 2009), active, self-directed learning (Beasley & Ford, 2004) and critical thinkers (Paul, 1993). Barrett (2005: 113)

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<sup>2</sup> The Higher Education and Training Awards Council (HETAC) in Ireland is the qualifications awarding body for third level educational and training institutions outside of the university sector.

describes PBL as “*hard fun*” and there is also some evidence that PBL increases Grade Point Average (Nii & Chin, 1996).

## **Social Care and Problem Based Learning Evaluation**

As noted, there is an absence of published research and evaluation on the use Problem Based Learning in Social Care. By broadening the search term to Social Work and PBL, a small number of published examples of evaluation of PBL in Social Work Education are available (Hartsell and Parker, 2008; Wong & Lam, 2007) and numerous examples of evaluation of PBL in general (Cook and Moyle, 2002; Carlisle and Ibbotson, 2005; Warren, Dondlinger, McLeod, Bigenho, 2012). All of these examples have the potential to be adapted and used to evaluate modules delivered using PBL. However, they have been developed for one particular module or programme in mind. Marcangelo and Ginty (2006) who were members of a UK based Problem Based Learning Special Interest Group (PBL SIG)<sup>3</sup> reviewed published evaluation studies of PBL and found many “small scale” studies which provided little opportunity for generalisation. This was a catalyst for the development of the Problem Based Learning Evaluation Toolkit by the Problem Based Learning Special Interest Group, which Marcangelo was a member (Marcangelo, Gibbon and Cage, 2009).

The design and availability of an evaluation toolkit provides a unique opportunity for a comparative evaluation between small scale studies using an evaluation tool that has been researched, designed and implemented by a PBL SIG with a variety of expertise. This gives the potential for small-scale evaluations to contribute to a broader body of knowledge. It is for this reason that this toolkit was used in the design of the questionnaire for this evaluation (Marcangelo, Gibbon and Cage, 2009).

## **Strengths and Limitations of Student Evaluation**

It is important to acknowledge the strengths and limitations of student evaluation which is the focus of the evaluation used in this project. Felder and Brent (2004) and Campion and O’Neill (2005) agree that student ratings and feedback should form essential components of any evaluation of teaching methods. However, both authors emphasise that there should be other evaluative methods.

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3 “A Problem-based Learning Special Interest Group (PBL SIG) was established in 2000 in the United Kingdom (UK) to share ideas and offer advice and guidance to others who were considering using PBL” (Gibbon and Marcangelo, 2012:1) This was established by the HEA Health Sciences and Practice subject centre (<http://www.health.heacademy.ac.uk/>)

The value of utilising student evaluations has been identified in relation to its benefits in enhancing teaching and faculty effectiveness (Centra, 1993). Student comments offer important insight and perspective on the student experience (Alhija & Fresco, 2009; Tucker, 2014). The Centre for Teaching and Learning at Stanford University (1997) identify the student evaluations as important for several reasons. Firstly the student ratings are often used by faculty and department heads are able to make informed decisions about staff retention, pay rises and promotions. Secondly student evaluations also emphasise the importance of teaching effectiveness in academic departments and finally they also most importantly provide details to lecturers on how to develop and refine their teaching practices to improve the learning experience for students. As suggested by LaFee (2014: 4) *“no one spends more time watching teachers at work than their students, so it follows than no one is in a better position to evaluate their performance”*.

Factors that may influence student evaluation are examined by a number of authors (Lindahl and Ungar, 2010; Campion and O'Neill, 2005; Worthington, 2002; Van Rossum and Shenk, 1984 cited in Campion and O'Neill, 2005). Van Rossum and Shenk (1984) make an important point regarding the influence of student expectation of teaching. Where a student expects a lecturer to use a traditional didactic model of teaching, a lecturer who is using PBL may not be fulfilling their expectation therefore the student may evaluate PBL negatively. Worthington (2002: 13) found that characteristics such as *“expected grade in the subject, student age, ethnicity and gender, along with perceptions of the evaluation process itself”* impacted on student evaluation. Factors such as *“teachers' course load, grading leniency, student interest in the material, entertaining personal style, and physical attractiveness”* have also been shown to influence student evaluation of a subject (Lindahl and Ungar, 2010: 71).

Despite the recognition of the complex factors which can impact on the feedback from student evaluations, given that the focus of this evaluation was to gain an insight into the student experience of problem based learning the significance of the student voice could not be underestimated. Student evaluations were chosen by the authors as the most appropriate tool to gather feedback on the pbl project as it would give an insight into the student experience of problem based learning allowing the authors to assess the use of pbl as a teaching and learning tool in the training of student social care workers.

Taking the potential impact of the timing of the evaluation on the findings into consideration, it was decided to wait for a number of weeks after students had received their final grade before giving the students the option of participating in the evaluation.

## **Film as a Teaching Method/Case Study**

A literature search on the use of film to teach Social Care Workers or Social Pedagogues (European Equivalent) yields no results. By broadening the search term to film and teaching, examples from a number of disciplines are available. These include Psychiatry (Akram et al., 2009; Bhugra, 2003), Psychotherapy (Edwards, 2010), Cognitive Psychology (Conner, 1996), Social Policy (Shdaimah, 2009) and Social Work (Liles, 2007). The general outcome of these studies is that the use of Film has been beneficial for student learning, particularly in relation to teaching students about the applied and practical elements of a subject. Liles (2007) noted that film has been helpful in engaging students, stimulating discussion, and introducing skill-building exercises. The benefit of film in a social work education context was seen in "*bringing a human dimension*" to social work concepts (Liles, 2007: 49). Limitations of film have also been outlined in the literature including unrealistic portrayal (Datta, 2009), artistic license (Akram et al., 2009) and possibility of technical issues (Liles, 2007). However, in terms of unrealistic portrayal and artistic license, Datta (2009) noted that once students are aware of the fictitious nature of what they are watching, a film case study can provide a good starting point for analysis and discussion.

## **The PBL Task and Research Methodology**

In November 2013 second year social care students at the Dublin Institute of Technology were given a PBL assignment. The assignment required them to develop a risk assessment and care plan for their client Claireece 'Precious' Jones and her son Abdul using the film Precious as their case study (Table 1).

*Table 1: Problem Based Learning Assignment Guidelines*

| Principles of Professional Practice Assignment   | B.A Social Care Year 2 |
|--|------------------------|
| <p>Prepare a risk assessment report and care plan for Claireece Precious Jones (age 16)</p>  |                        |
| <p>And her son Abdul Jamal Jones.</p>  |                        |
| <p>Provide precise details of what you will do and how you will engage with this family considering, the level of risk and concerns for the above family members.</p>  |                        |
| <p>You are asked to present your care plan based on a recognised risk assessment framework. The framework used should be guided by strengths based perspectives.</p>   |                        |
| <p>You will have 4 PBL sessions which will be facilitated by your lecturer/facilitator. For each PBL session you must elect a chair and a recorder. This should be rotated to ensure all students receive the opportunity to act as a chair and a recorder in the pbl sessions.</p>  |                        |
| <p>Each group must submit</p>  |                        |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Group Report (5000 words excluding appendices and bibliography) worth 50%.</li><li>• Risk assessment report and care plan for Claireece Precious Jones (age 16) and her son Abdul Jamal Jones.</li><li>• Record of each session using the four column process demonstrating how this facilitated clarification of the risk assessment, generation of ideas, facts, new learning, care plan and evaluation.</li><li>• Individual report on experience of the group process (500 words) and key learning for you as an individual in relation to risk assessment, care planning and strengths based perspectives (1000 words). (50%)</li></ul> |                        |

During the project it was explained to the groups that they were to envisage themselves as a social care team working on this case. Four of the PBL sessions were facilitated by lecturers and groups/teams could also meet outside of these scheduled sessions. Each of the sessions was recorded using Barrows (1986) four column table provided by the facilitator (Table 2)

*Table 2: Problem Based Learning Record Sheet*

| Ideas | Facts | Learning Issues | Actions |
|-------|-------|-----------------|---------|
|       |       |                 |         |

In this way students gained the important experience of minute taking at meetings and this also allowed the group to track their progress and set goals for themselves as they advanced through the PBL process. Each team member also had to act as a chairperson in order to ensure the meetings were progressing forward and so students gained an experience of chairing a meeting. Prioritising goals, record keeping, minute taking and chairing meetings are skills social care workers are regularly expected to demonstrate in practice (Doyle and Lalor, 2013; Hetac, 2010; Moss, 2012).

Students and lecturers had to adapt to the change in role as their lecturer became the facilitator. This transition from lecturer to facilitator is recognised in the literature as a challenging aspect of Problem Based Learning for both lecturers and students (Savin Baden, 2003). The title of Alison King's 1993 article "from sage on the stage to guide on the side" illustrates the changing position of the lecturer in the PBL classroom. The facilitator's role is a varied one but is based in the premise of supporting and encouraging learning and enquiry without being overly directive (Walsh, 1995; Armitage, 2013). Walsh (1995) highlights the importance of the facilitator in supporting group formation and development without directing it. Armitage (2013) emphasises the equal role of students and facilitators as co-creators of new knowledge. Marcangelo, Gibbon and Cage (2009: 13) describe the role of the facilitator as "key to the success" of the process and the style of the facilitator as having the potential to "make or break" the process.

Following the submission of the students' assignments, the PBL project was evaluated using Qualitative Open Ended Questionnaires based on the Problem Based Learning evaluation toolkit that was devised in 2009 by the Problem Based Learning Special Interest Group in Health Sciences and Practice (Marcangelo, Gibbon and Cage, 2009). Given the focus of this evaluation and the nature of the case study used, a number of questions were added in order to gather feedback and data in relation to the student experience of using film as case study in the project.

All of the students were given the option of participating in the evaluation and of a possible 46 students who undertook the PBL assignment, 36 completed the evaluation questionnaire. All participants completed a participant consent form.

## Findings

Although the evaluation questionnaire gathered data from the 2nd year Social Care students<sup>4</sup> on a range of issues related to the PBL project, for the purpose of this article the focus will be placed on the students' perspectives of the strengths and weaknesses of using PBL as a teaching tool for social care students, the value of a PBL approach in helping social care students link theory and practice and the students' experiences of using film as a case study in the undertaking of the PBL process.

### *Problem Based Learning (PBL) as a Learning Tool*

Students were asked to compare Problem Based Learning to other forms of learning that they had experienced in their social care training so far. The overall feedback from the data suggests that students felt it was beneficial but more difficult. Students described "*independent learning*", "*reflection*", and "*working together*" as benefits of PBL but also highlighted difficulties including "*feeling lost*" and finding it "*difficult to understand*". The feedback on the use of PBL as a learning tool for social care students was positive overall as participants commented on the fact that PBL allowed them to use their initiative throughout the process and allowed them to learn and share ideas and knowledge from other students in their group/team who were on work placement in different social care agencies.

### *PBL and Linking Theory to Practice*

A large number of students appreciated the practical nature of the process and felt this helped them in relation to linking relevant theory to practice.

*"PBL was the nexus of theory and practice".*

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<sup>4</sup> PBL was facilitated for Students in two groups of twenty three students. This student group was also engaged in practice placements in a range of social care settings including disability services, children's services, residential care, mental health services and homeless and addiction services.

This was particularly relevant in the students researching of risk assessment models and concepts related to strengths based practice approaches.

*“PBL is very practical and helps give you a better understanding of risk assessments, care plans and the strengths based approach. The hands on approach are an easier way to learn”.*

*“You learn more from it because you have to research material and find out for yourself”.*

*“It’s (PBL) very practical and helps give a better understanding of risk assessments, strengths based perspectives and care plans”.*

### ***PBL and Team Work***

Students emphasised the value of working in teams as a support to their learning. Working in a group/team seemed to promote the development of confidence and skills which would be of use to students working in teams in a real social care practice environment:

*“Working as part of team helped me learn from others and made me more confident”.*

Some students believed however, that working in groups or teams also raised challenges:

*“Sometimes it can be more difficult working in a group if there is not good communication as they can be an overlap of other people’s work”.*

When asked what they felt they had learnt as a result of engaging in Problem Based Learning, participants referred to skills such as “self-reliance”, “independent learning” and “knowledge about how to complete an assessment and care plan”. These corresponded with the DIT (2010) graduate attributes and the key skills outlined by Brodie (2011). Furthermore students seemed to benefit from the opportunity of using their own initiative which helped build their confidence and communication skills, core skills required by effective Social Care Workers (Lalor and Share, 2013).

### ***Experiences of the PBL Process***

The lecturers were conscious from prior use of the PBL process that in comparison to completing more traditional forms of continuous assessment such as writing

essays or conducting literature reviews, students often experience a range of emotions as they transition through the PBL process. This was relevant for the students on this programme as this was the first time they have encountered PBL as a teaching and learning approach. Furthermore, as lecturers engaged with the groups and facilitated them through the assignment, it became clear that students encountered a range of different feelings during the different stages of the project including “Anxiety”, “Frustration”, “Confusion”, “Satisfaction”, “Understanding”, “Relief” and “Happiness”. Ryan’s (2013) study also included a question on emotions and he discovered similar findings in terms of the spectrum of emotions experienced by science students during a PBL project he evaluated. This seems particularly significant to the field of social care as the self is defined as “the principal tool of the social care worker” (Kennefick, 2006: 213), and it is likely that social care students are likely to experience a range of emotions throughout their practice careers.

In conjunction with the emotions encountered in completing this project, students were asked to describe experiences that they found positive and challenging while engaging in Problem Based Learning. Students noted that they “*applied themselves better*” and most students commented on the “*opportunity to engage in activity that is similar to the workplace*” and feeling more “*prepared*” for the workplace. Several students felt it was beneficial to work on a case in an environment where it was okay to make mistakes rather than for this to happen in the practice field. Participants also seem to appreciate that this project replicated topics that may directly affect them in practice whilst for others the project helped them reflect on their work in practice placement

*“It helped me look differently at my practice approach in my placement and made me more positive”.*

The negative experiences described by student related most to “*feeling lost*”, group dynamics and lack of guidance and “*not knowing what we were doing*”. Although students enjoyed the opportunity to work with different people on this project, this also seemed to raise a lot of challenges. These challenges centred on overcoming communication difficulties within the team or dealing with different personalities and working styles, again an issue that is likely to occur for social care students in their future practice.

*“I found some people in the group difficult, but it helped me look at alternative approaches in working with these people”.*

It was pleasing to see as per the goals of the assignment, that students utilised these challenges in order to develop skills relevant to their future social care practice. When asked what they learnt most from the PBL process typical student responses included:

*“You have to be able to work with conflict in a team to debate ideas and resolve them to get the work done”.*

*“I learned how to work as part of team and how working in group can help in working with a client”.*

### *Use of Film as Case Study*

In previous years lecturers had used written case studies (drawn mainly from examples from their own practice experience) as the focus for PBL projects, but in the academic year 2013/2014 a film case study was introduced. Therefore a key goal of the evaluation was to gather students' views on the value of using a film case study in the PBL task.

When asked to comment on the use of film students noted that it *“made the scenario more realistic”*. This was seen as helpful for a number of reasons including the ability to observe *“face and emotions”* and to *“visualise Precious as a real client”* or as one student aptly summarised *“you could put a face on the person”*.

Students also mentioned the increased engagement and understanding of the case study that they experienced as a result of the use of a film case study.

*“the use of film allowed us to have a much deeper understanding of the case study”*

*“we were able to see various issues that could affect various service users’and’it was great, it was easier to interpret the situation”.*

The use of film was also described as being *“relevant”* and *“more interesting”* and students noted the benefits for visual learners. The use of the film as a case study seemed to help students become more engaged and motivated in working on the case.

*“As I learn better visually it really engaged me and kept me interested”*

The film case study also provided the groups with some background information which helped them in developing their group reports.

*"It gave a scenario that would be relevant for us to work with"*

*"I would rather the film because most college work we do is written on slides so the film made it more interesting"*

When asked if they would prefer a film case study or a written case study there was an almost unanimous preference for the film case study which most students felt it was more interesting and easier to interpret. The 36 students who participated were asked if they would prefer to use a film or written case study in future, 30 participants indicated that they would prefer to use film. Three would prefer a written case study, while two did not answer this question and one participant indicated a preference for a combination of a written and film case study. The only negative comment was that while the use of film was *"innovative"*, it was *"not a nice film to watch"*.

### ***Benefits of Using Film***

Students were asked specifically to describe the benefits of using film. The benefits that students described were similar to those outlined in the literature (Conner, 1996; Bhugra, 2003; Liles, 2007; Akram et al., 2009; Shdaimah, 2009; Edwards, 2010). Students noted that the *"visual aspect was good"* and described finding the film as *"easier to stay tuned in"*. Students suggested that the film case study offered advantages over a written case study including the opportunities for engagement, realism and detail that it provides.

*"great detail given, scenarios were played out in a realistic manner"*.

*"it was more interesting and you could engage rather than reading off a page"*.

The obvious barrier to using real life clients in education was articulated succinctly by one student who noted that you can *"see someone's experience and story without disturbing the individual"*. Interestingly several students reported they had viewed the film several times during the course of the project which helped them formulate new ideas or piece of information to help in compiling their group and individual reports. A further comment which explains the advantage of film as a pedagogical tool noted that:

*"...we feel comfortable taking part in it (the PBL process) because we watch films anyway"*.

Liles (2007) made a similar observation

*“Feature films can be quite effective in engaging students and holding their interest in particular topics because they relate to the medium itself. Films are an integral part of popular culture and most of our students have grown up going to the movies, watching movies on TV, and renting videos and DVDs”.*

### ***Disadvantages of Using Film***

In order to probe further into the limitations, students were asked to outline the disadvantages of using film. The disadvantages that the students described were similar to those noted in the literature and referred to unrealistic portrayal (Datta, 2009) and artistic license (Akram et al., 2009). Comments included *“a film gives greater insight which can be unrealistic”, “not a real person”* and *“some information could not be verified”*.

Students also commented on the *“disturbing”* nature of the film and the fact that the film was not based in an Irish context.

*“was American in terms of services and social care system”*

*“the fact that it wasn’t Irish made it a little difficult but I don’t think there were much disadvantages”*

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

This research albeit on a small scale provides an insight into the value on the use of Film and Problem Based Learning in the education and training of social care students. The findings are similar to the findings of authors who have used Film and Problem Based Learning in other disciplines (Conner, 1996; Bhugra, 2003; Liles, 2007; Akram et al., 2009; Datta, 2009; Shdaimah, 2009; Edwards, 2010). A literature search yielded no results on studies on the use of Problem Based Learning and Film in Social Care. Therefore the findings documented here suggest that this may be an innovative and valuable way of engaging students and supporting them to learn how to solve the real world problems that they will experience in their profession. While some of the limitations have been outlined, it appears that the use of film as a case study or ‘problem’ in Problem Based Learning has many benefits, but the key benefit seems to be the level of engagement that students experience as a result of using film. This engagement seems crucial in helping students develop skills crucial to their development as social care workers such as problem solving,

conflict management, team work, report writing, using initiative and leadership skills. The feedback from the evaluation reported upon here also emphasises the value of using PBL and Film in helping students incorporate theory to practice. The students in this project through their reports and their evaluations showed an ability to understand and incorporate important theoretical and practice concepts into their work, which is an important requirement of social care graduates (HETAC, 2010). Whilst the feedback from the evaluations collected here provides some insight into the benefits and challenges of incorporating PBL and Film in the training of social care workers, further studies on a larger scale would be welcome in providing a more comprehensive evaluation on the use of this approach as pedagogical teaching aid in social care education.

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