

Self-Awareness on Social Work Courses: A Study of Students Perceptions of Teaching Methods in an English University

Authors : Deborah Amas

Abstract : Global accreditation standards require Higher Education Institutions to ensure social work students develop self-awareness by reflecting on their personal values and critically evaluating how these influence their thinking for professional practice. The knowledge base indicates there are benefits and vulnerabilities for students when they self-reflect and more needs to be understood about the learning environments that nurture self-awareness. The connection between teaching methods and self-awareness is of interest in this paper which reports findings from an on-line survey with students on BA and MA qualifying social work programs in an English university (n=120). Students were asked about the importance of self-awareness and their experiences of teaching methods for self-reflection. Generally, students thought that self-awareness is of high importance in their education. Students also shared stories that illuminated deeper feelings about the potential risks associated with self-disclosure. The findings indicate that students appreciate safe opportunities for self-reflection, but can be wary of associated assessments or feeling judged. The research supports arguments to qualitatively improve facilitation of self-awareness through the curriculum.

Keywords : reflection, self-awareness, self-reflection, social work education

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