Opportunities to strengthen community development teaching in undergraduate social work programmes: an international curriculum comparative case study analysis

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Plan for presentation

Introduction

Context

Methods

Results

Conclusions

Recommendations

References

Introduction

AIM

RATIONALE

Context

International definition of SW

Neoliberalism

Policy

Demography

*"Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes **social change** and **development, social cohesion**, and the **empowerment** and **liberation** of people. Principles of **social justice, human rights, collective responsibility** and **respect** for **diversities** are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of **social work, social sciences,** humanities and **indigenous knowledge**, social work engages **people and structures** to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing" (IFSW, 2014).*
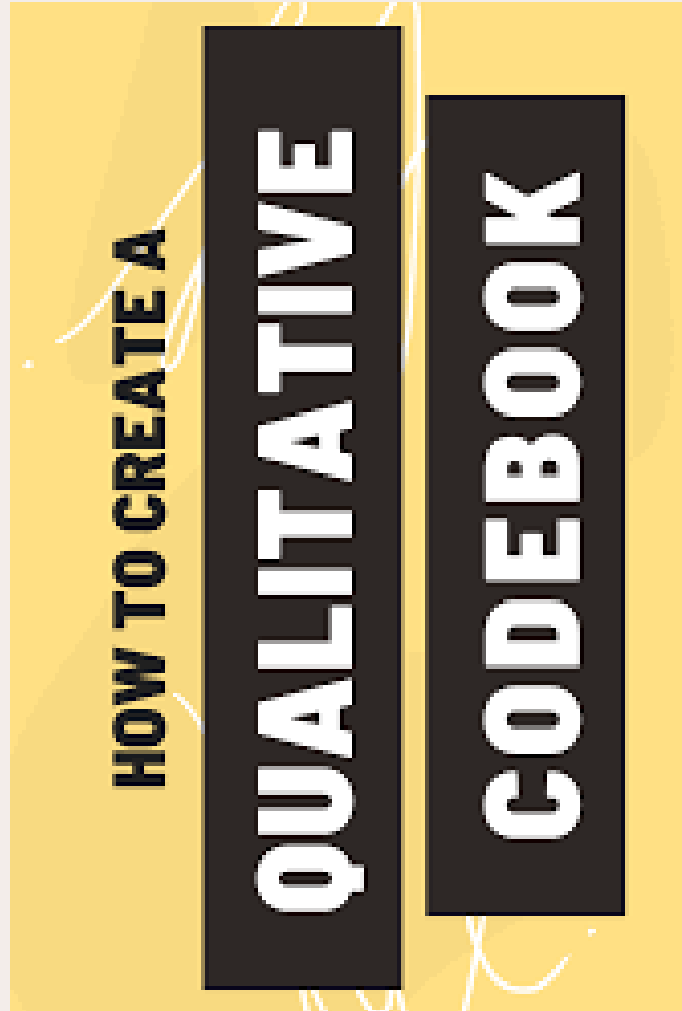
Methodology 1

HOW TO CREATE A QUALITATIVE CODEBOOK

Table 1: extract from codebook

	Terminology
1	Community development
2	Social economic development
3	Community work
4	Community-led practice
5	Community mapping
6	Asset-based community development
7	Meso/mezzo level practice
8	Co-production
9	Capacity building (with community focus)

What language is associated with community development both locally and globally?

Methodology 2

Module name and code	Learning outcomes linked to concepts, theories, and/or approaches in CD	Assignment briefs linked to concepts, theories, and/or approaches in CD	Core CD readings	Any other content not yet captured
Eg Social work theories and models for practice SOWK301				

Table 2: Matrix to record CD content from module handbooks

Resources

What are the core authors or resources that come to mind for your own teaching of community development?

Some examples:

- **Aimers, J., & Walker, P.** (2011). Incorporating community development into social work practice within the neoliberal environment. *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work*, 23(3), 38–49.

- **Das, C., O'Neill, M., & Pinkerton, J.** (2016). Re-engaging with community work as a method of practice in social work: A view from Northern Ireland. *Journal of Social Work*, 16(2), 196–215

- **Ife, J.** (2013). *Community development in an uncertain world: Vision, analysis and practice*. Cambridge University Press.

- **Ledwith, M.** (2020). *Community development: A critical and radical approach* (3rd ed.). Policy Press.

- **Lynch, D., Lathouras, A., & Forde, C**. (2021). Community development and social work teaching and learning in a time of global interruption. *Community Development Journal*, 56(4), 566–586.

- **Nel, H.** (2018). A comparison between the asset-oriented and needs-based community development approaches in terms of systems changes. *Practice Social Work in Action*, 30(1), 33–52.

- **Turbett, C.** (2020). Rediscovering and mainstreaming community social work in Scotland. IRISS Insight 57.
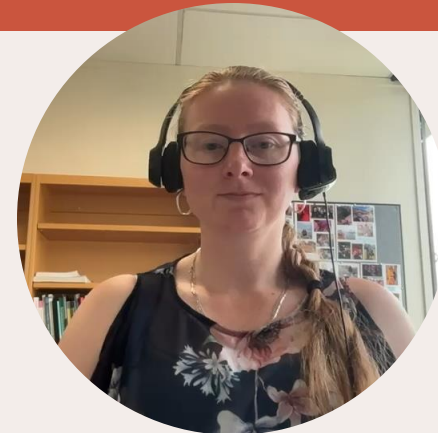
Otago University Case Study

CD focused core modules

Compulsory taught modules with CD content

Learning outcomes

Assignment briefs

Readings

At Otago University, CD is deeply embedded, with two specialist modules and three social work modules which fully focus on CD content across learning outcomes, assignment briefs, and required reading lists.

There are only two modules of ten social work modules at Otago University that do not explicitly address CD content.

Table 3 University of Otago BSW community development content summary

Module	Evidence of CD in learning outcomes?	Evidence of CD in assignment briefs?	Evidence of CD in set texts and required reading
SOWK301	🟩	🟩	🟩
SOWK302	🟧	🟧	🟩
SOWK303 (specialist)	🟩	🟩	🟩
SOWK304	🟩	🟩	🟩
SOWK320	🟥	🟥	🟥
SOWK392 (Field Ed)	🟩	🟧	No required reading
SOWK492 (Field ed)	🟧	🟩	No required reading
SOWK402	🟥	🟧	🟥
SOWK403 (specialist)	🟩	🟩	🟩
SOWK480	🟩	🟩	🟩

QUB Case Study

Compulsory taught modules with CD content

Learning outcomes

Assignment briefs

Readings

Results QUB

QUB includes explicit CD content in only four of its thirteen modules, with limited references in some others.

Although QUB emphasises meso-level perspectives in nine modules (focused on service user groups and social issues), there remains a gap in explicitly preparing students for CD roles.

Table 4 Queen's University Belfast Bachelor of Social Work community development summary

Module	Evidence of CD in learning outcomes?	Evidence of CD in assignment briefs?	Evidence of CD in set texts and required reading
SWK1003/2007	🟥	🟥	🟩
SWK1004/2003	🟥	🟥	🟥
SWK1005/2017	🟩	🟥	🟧
SWK2006	🟧	🟧	🟥
SWK2009	🟧	🟧	🟥
SWK2013/2015 (Field ed)	🟥	🟥	🟥
SWK2014/2016 (Field ed)	🟧	🟩	🟧
SWK2018	🟩	🟧	🟧
SWK3003	🟥	🟥	🟥
SWK3004	🟧	🟥	🟥
SWK3008	🟧	🟥	🟥
SWK3009 (Field ed)	🟥	🟥	🟥
SWK3010 (Field ed)	🟧	🟧	🟥

Implementation

Reviewing the approach taken by QUB & Otago how could you strengthen CD teaching in your modules?

Please take 10 minutes to brainstorm your ideas before we feedback

Recommendations

➢ SW programmes internationally undergo a curriculum review (using code book in Table 1 and matrix in Table 2) to identify the strengths, deficits, and areas for integrating CD concepts, theories, models, and approaches into SW degree.

➢ SW programmes could review their assignment briefs and consider integrating a community focus to move the CD components from an implicit to explicit status.

➢ SW programmes could review reading lists and consider integrating core material that discusses CD concepts relevant to their context.

➢ SW programmes could consider appointing an advocate, like the academics in Otago University who will champion CD approaches in SW education.

➢ SW programmes could consider a dedicated CD/Community Social Work module.

Conclusion

Otago University is a strong example of integrating CD into its social work programme, with two specialist modules and six core modules addressing meso-level practice. In contrast, QUB focuses more on casework, and the curriculum may not be adequately preparing social workers for their future roles. Despite recent policy recommendations in NI, this paper calls for a stronger emphasis on CD in QUB's curriculum. This study highlights opportunities for curriculum reviews using our code book and matrix to better integrate CD into SW education using a constructive alignment approach

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