Master's thesis

NTNU
Norwegian University of Science and Technology
Faculty of Social and Educational Sciences
Department of Education and Lifelong Learning

Tilde Ingebrigtsen

Creativity in counselling

A qualitative study exploring how creative approaches can add to the field of counselling

Master's thesis in Master of Science in Counselling
Supervisor: Kristian Firing
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Abstract

In the field of counselling, there is a variety of methods and techniques that can be used. The counsellor-in-training learns to adapt counselling to the individual client. Since each client is different, it can be valuable to have practised different techniques in order to reach every client. By using creative techniques in counselling, the clients can explore other ways to express themselves. Creativity in counselling offers different ways of bringing thoughts and feelings to consciousness than traditional methods. Although many benefits of using creativity in counselling have been explored, creative techniques are often viewed as something additional, and courses on creativity are often found outside of master's degree programs in counselling.

This study seeks to explore counselling student's experiences with creativity in counselling in a required course in the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) master's program. With the research question: *How do counselling students experience using creative approaches in counselling?* The course consisted of lectures, discussions, and practical exercises. Students practiced the techniques on classmates, treating each other as clients, and observed and gave feedback to each other. Students participated in this study, by writing and submitting reflection logs about their expectations, thoughts, and experience in class. Reflection logs can provide insight without much interference from the researcher. Reflection logs were collected before class began, and after each class period. With a maximum of 7 logs submitted per student. The reflection logs formed the data material and were analysed using qualitative methods. Three main categories or themes emerged during the thematic analysis: possibilities, challenges, and mastery. These themes were discussed through theory and the research question. This study supports previous research findings that creative approaches are enjoyable for both the client and the counsellor, offer new perspectives, problem solving, and many techniques also have great potential for use in many different settings. With this study, I would like to encourage educators, counsellors, and counsellors in-training to consider exploring creative approaches in counselling, and finally make courses of creative approaches a natural part of master's programs in counselling.

Sammendrag

Innen rådgivningsfeltet finnes det en rekke metoder og teknikker som kan brukes. Rådgivningsstudenter lærer å tilpasse rådgivningen til den individuelle klienten. Siden hver klient er forskjellig, kan det være nyttig å opparbeide forskjellige teknikker for å nå fram til klienten. Ved å bruke kreative metoder i rådgivning, kan klienten finne andre måter å uttrykke seg på. Kreativitet i rådgivning tilbyr andre måter å bringe tanker og følelser til bevissthet enn tradisjonelle metoder. Til tross for at det er blitt forsket på fordelene ved å bruke kreativitet i rådgivning, blir kreative metoder ofte sett på som noe som brukes i tillegg, gjerne etter mer tradisjonelle metoder har blitt anvendt uten resultat. Fag om kreativitet i rådgivning finnes ofte utenfor masterstudiene i rådgivning og er ikke obligatoriske.

Hensikten med denne studien er å undersøke rådgiverstudenters erfaringer med kreativitet i rådgivning, i et obligatorisk fag i et masterprogram i rådgivningsvitenskap. Rådgivningsstudenter ved NTNU (Norges Teknisk-Naturvitenskapelige Universitet) deltok i studien ved å skrive refleksjonslogg om deres forventninger og erfaringer i faget. Faget besto av forelesninger, diskusjoner og praktisk øving. Studentene øvde på teknikker ved å være rådgivere for klassekamerater, være klienter for hverandre og observere hverandre. Datamaterialet i studien består av refleksjonslogger som ble analysert ved hjelp av kvalitative metoder. Tre hovedkategorier eller temaer dukket opp under den tematiske analysen: muligheter, utfordringer og mestring. Disse temaene ble diskutert i lys av teori og forskningsspørsmålet "*Hvordan opplever rådgivingsstudenter det kreative perspektivet i rådgivning?*". Funnene støtter tidligere forskning i og med at rådgiver og klient opplever kreative metoder som engasjerende, gir nye perspektiver, er problem-løsende, og mange teknikker har potensiale for bruk i ulike settinger. Med denne studien håper jeg å oppmuntre til å utforske kreative teknikker i rådgivning, og til slutt gjøre kreative fag i rådgivning til en naturlig del av masterprogram i rådgivning.

Forord

I dag er jeg stolt av å levere min masteroppgave i rådgivningsvitenskap. Fem år på universitetet nærmer seg slutten, og jeg er utrolig stolt over alt jeg har fått til. Det har vært en utrolig reise med både opp -og nedturer. Jeg er glad for muligheten til å gå master i rådgivning, som jeg kjente fra starten at var riktig sted å være.

Jeg vil si takk til alle forelesere og medstudenter som har både utfordret og lagt til rette for utvikling og mestring. Jeg er utrolig takknemlig for de faglige og sosiale møtene underveis på studiet. Det er i disse møtene vi lærer!

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Tilde Ingebrigtsen

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1 Introduction

Counselling is mostly talk therapy, but it is not given that everyone can express themselves properly by talking. In counselling, the main focus is the client. It is a helping relationship between the counsellor and the client, where the counselor is fully focused and attentive to the client (Ivey et al., 2012, p. 366). The difference between a normal conversation and a counseling session is that the client receives full attention. The counsellor puts himself aside and gives focus to the client. This is special, because in normal conversations, the intent is often to share the attention; to talk about your things and ask others about their matters. It is understandable that not everyone is used to getting full attention and talk about their innermost thoughts and feelings during counselling, certainly not with a stranger. Thoughts or feelings may have been suppressed for a while and it can be difficult or overwhelming to open up and suddenly give them full attention.

People can endure many changes and crises in life, without getting psychological issues. However, it can be very difficult to move forward, change thought patterns, or make changes without guidance. There are many reasons why people seek to talk with a counsellor. Managing stress, finding career opportunities, developing leadership skills - these are all examples of challenges that people find difficult to overcome on their own. It's easy to feel overwhelmed, unbalanced, or stuck. It can be hard to find solutions to our problems, even though we are supposed to know ourselves best. A counsellor can help in many ways, such as helping clients accept their situation, define goals, see things from a different perspective, and support them in the counselling process. A counsellor learns to adapt the counselling to the individual client. It is not in the nature of a counsellor to work with people with health problems such as mental disorders. Moreover, a counsellor can listen, challenge, and sometimes give advice. There are many types of counsellors, and some are specialized, for example, career counsellors, family counsellors, groups counsellors, Human Resources and business counsellors. Counsellors can be found at universities, schools, NAV, and in both the private and public sectors.

It can be challenging for the counsellor to adjust the counselling to the client and find the right techniques for the individual and the case. A counsellor may feel stuck, and when this happens, it may be because they are unable to think outside the box, and offer their clients alternatives for change (Deacon, 2000, p. 68). Often only after having tried using more traditional techniques, a counsellor will resort to using creative techniques. A counsellor typically only tries creative techniques after having previously tried more traditional techniques. Creative techniques are often considered "additional techniques" in talk therapies (Thomas, 2017, p. 27). Gladding (2008, p. 98) argues that it is surprising that creative approaches are considered additional in counselling because counselling is creative, and without creativity, there would not be counselling, and likely no other helping professions either. According to Stoltz, Apodaca and Mazahreh (2018, p. 266), guided imagery (one creative technique) is, despite support by researchers and practitioners, an underutilized technique in career counselling. According to Rogers (1954, pp. 249-260), creativity and change processes are closely related in counselling. It can be said that counselling situations where the aim is change, is also creative in that one tries to create something new.

Creative techniques in counselling are defined as purposeful use of the client's creative imagination for therapeutic purposes (Thomas, 2017, pp. 21-29). In counselling, the imagination is used to access and work with aspects of the self that are hidden from conscious awareness (Thomas, 2017, pp. 21-29). Gladding (2008, pp. 97-104) defines creativity in counselling as a way to bring thoughts and feelings into awareness. Fantasy and creativity are important to change thought patterns, to bring change and movement into the field of counselling (Skottun & Krüger, 2017).

Creativity and fantasy are two different concepts that are often mixed, and their boundaries are often blurred. Later in chapter 2.4, we will take a closer look at the definitions. Creativity is about coming up with ideas, alternatives, or possibilities that can be useful in solving various problems. It can mean creating something within a certain set of constraints, such as building something with certain tools, finding entertainment in a boring situation, or communicating with someone who does not speak the same language. Fantasy on the other hand, makes us able to imagine and create something beyond reality, simply by using our thoughts. Fantasy is our ability to daydream, to immerse ourselves into something, and to imagine something that we cannot see in front of us. In counselling, fantasy can promote insight into a client's needs, values, and knowledge (Owen, 2010, p. 79). However, the experience of using fantasy can be both positive and negative. Many people refer to negative fantasies as worries, which often include thoughts of disaster, exaggerations, and thoughts of negative future outcomes (Owen, 2010, p. 79). Fantasy and creativity can be powerful in both positive and negative ways. Everyone uses both fantasy and creativity to some degree because they are a central part of being human (Owen, 2010, p. 79). As a counsellor, it is desirable to know how to use it in valuable and healthy ways.

When it comes to helping clients solve their problems, counsellors use something called divergent thinking skills (Deacon, 2000, p. 68). Divergent thinking is a process of creating ideas to solve a problem in order to advance innovation or change; thinking "outside the box" (Deacon, 2000, p. 68). Divergent thinking exercises help counsellors improve their divergent thinking; read more about this in the Theory chapter.

Creative techniques are versatile because they can be used in many different situations. They can be used in individual, group, and family counselling and are also appropriate for multicultural settings (Gladding, 2008, pp. 97-104). According to Buser, Buser, Gladding and Wilkerson (2011, p. 257), clients become more engaged in the counselling process, because they naturally enjoy creative activities.

1.1 Research question

The purpose of this master's thesis is to add another dimension to the field of counselling, by normalizing the use of creativity in counselling. By collecting reflection logs, I can gain insight into counselling students' expectations and experiences with learning about creative approaches during the semester.

The research question is:

How do counselling students experience using creative approaches in counselling?

1.2 Personal reason for the chosen topic

I was a student in the 2021 RAD3033 course on creativity in counselling in the master's program in counselling. I found it very interesting to try out different techniques than before, and sometimes when practicing the exercises, I felt like we created magic! We engaged strongly in the exercises and experienced how effective the techniques could be. I have had several "aha" moments while using creative techniques, especially in the role as a client, that have led to important discoveries for me personally. This has made me curious about the potential of using creative approaches in counselling.

A central part of the course was to write reflection logs. I also made some discoveries while writing these. Writing reflection logs forces you to look back and reflect, meta-thinking takes place, and you gather the experiences into something specific and formulated. There is room in your head for many thoughts at once, but when you write, you can only put down one thought at a time. After a long day of active learning, writing down thoughts helped processing and close the process. This experience gave me the idea that collecting logs can be a way to gain insight into students' learning process, without interfering.

I noticed that students had different attitudes and associations with concepts such as creativity and fantasy, especially at the beginning of the course. Something that made me interested, was that some students seemed curious and open, while other students seemed more sceptical and hesitant. I wanted to look more closely at how students experienced a course like this.

When I started reading articles about creative methods in counselling, I discovered that courses on creativity is not always mandatory, or a part of master's program. Reading this surprised me. I thought that every counsellor had at least some knowledge of creative approaches in counselling, and I was surprised to read that this is not always the case.

1.3 Further structure of the thesis

This thesis is divided into 5 chapters. Chapter 1. presented the background of the research question, and personal reasons for the chosen topic. Chapter 2. presents the theoretical framework of the thesis. Chapter 3. highlights the methodological choices made in data collection and analysis - including insight into my role as a researcher on the topic of the thesis, on the way to the analysis of the thesis presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 presents findings and discusses the findings of the study in relation to relevant theory and the research question. Considerations, limitations, and future research are also discussed. Chapter 6 provides a summary of the findings of the thesis in light of theory, and the conclusion.

2 Theory

This chapter presents the theoretical framework for this thesis. This chapter includes: the existential-humanistic approach to counselling, the history of creative approaches, previous research on creativity in counselling, traditional counselling with examples, creative techniques, and examples of creative techniques.

2.1 The existential-humanistic approach

There are different theoretical approaches to address problems and issues in counselling. The theoretical perspective, methods or techniques influence the content and focus of the counselling session. In existentialist angled counselling the client's challenges are associated with life, relationships, everyday life, present -and future challenges (Ivey et al., 2012, p. 366). The existential-humanistic tradition differs from other traditions in that the counsellor does not take the role of "expert", which means counsellor and client are equals. Unlike other theoretical approaches, the client is responsible for improving their life, not the counsellor. It is the client who explores their resources and the challenges they face. A counsellor should not give answers or advice but rather encourage the clients to find solutions on their own, so that the client is responsible for their solution (Ivey et al., 2012, p. 366). This holds the client accountable, which is an important part of counselling. The client is given control. In this way, the client has the power and influence to affect the world and determine their own destiny (Ivey et al., 2012, p. 366).

This tradition has a non-deterministic worldview, meaning that things are not predetermined by past experiences (Ivey et al., 2012, p. 366). For example, if a child has had a bad upbringing, he or she may still live a good life as an adult. The philosophy is that people are essentially good, rational, social, future-oriented, and realistic. The goal of this tradition is for the clients to understand where they are in life. That the client recognizes where he/she ideally wants to be, finds the answer to his/her own challenges, and takes control of his/her own life. Unlike other approaches, the client is responsible for improving his or her life, not the counsellor (Ivey et al., 2012).

The existentialist-humanist tradition aims to see humans in a wider perspective and emphasizes the fact that humans are social beings. It emphasizes that relationships are important for every individual and that not understanding and respecting others, because they are different from oneself is the main cause of anxiety and loneliness according to this tradition (Ivey et al., 2012, p. 367).

Regarding the helping role in an existential-humanistic perspective, it is typical to emphasize the importance of establishing a good relationship with the client (Clarkson & Cavicchia, 2014). It is about making contact with the world in the present moment, rather than with the future or the past (Clarkson & Cavicchia, 2014). Typically, there is a more holistic frame of reference that integrates thoughts, emotions, and the body (Clarkson & Cavicchia, 2014). The counsellor must be accepting of the client, listen, mirror body language, and encourage the client (Ivey et al., 2012, p. 369). The relationship between counsellor and client is the most central component for growth and development in the counselling process (Ivey et al., 2012). The counsellor uses a

Socratic method by asking questions and encouraging the client to think and reflect in new ways. It is important that the counsellor appears open and unbiased when speaking with the client. Using a method where the counsellor "reports back" during the conversation and guides the client in interpreting what comes up in the conversation. The goal is not to look for hidden meanings, but to accept what comes up, even if it is positive or negative, successes or setbacks. The existential- humanistic tradition has contributed to the field of counselling with some important theories: existential, person-centered, motivational interviewing, logotherapy, and Gestalt, which have greatly expanded practitioners' approach to promoting their clients' mental health. (Ivey et al., 2012).

Carl Rogers (1954) is central in the existential- humanistic approach to counselling and therapy. He developed client-centered therapy, in which counsellors assume that clients have the power and motivation to help themselves. They are given the responsibility to solve their own problems under the guidance of the counsellor (Ivey et al., 2012). The goal is to help clients achieve personal growth and self-actualization. The counsellor wants to facilitate self-discovery so that the client finds answers themselves and makes decisions that are their own, as it gives the client room for maturation, development, and motivation for change (Rogers, 1954). The counsellor can facilitate self-discovery by listening, encouraging, and helping the client fin answers for themselves. The aim is to create an atmosphere where the client can explore and gain clarity and insight to handle own challenges. This happens if the relationship is safe and trusting.

In the relationship with the client, there are three components that must be present for impact and positive outcomes in counselling: Congruence, empathy, and unconditional positive regard (Rogers, 1954). Congruence is about being authentic and genuine. According to Rogers (1954), a conscious and transparent display of one's emotions leads to a more real and open relationship with the client. Empathy is about understanding what the client is feeling and showing the client that the counsellor understands. Unconditional positive regard refers to the attitude of "I accept you as you are." A counsellor does not have to approve of every action the client takes, but the client must feel that he or she is accepted for who he or she is.

2.2 History of creativity in counselling

In the 1930s and 1940s, clinicians became aware of the limitations of verbal therapy with very disturbed patients (Thomas, 2017, p. 22). Some clinicians began to work together with artists to incorporate art, music, and other expressive arts into the treatment of patients (Thomas, 2017, p. 22). One attempt to incorporate art into treatment was the use of music to reach patients who had been traumatized by World War I (Thomas, 2017, p. 22). This was the beginning of professional arts therapies (Thomas, 2017, p. 22).

In the expansion of creative interventions in counselling, Fritz Perls (1978) played a central role (Thomas, 2017, p. 22). Perls and his wife Laura Perls developed Gestalt therapy in the 1940s, as an alternative to traditional psychoanalysis. Gestalt is German, and is translated to whole, pattern, or form. It represents the holistic; mind, emotions and body of the individual. Gestalt therapy is based on humanistic values: individual freedom, creativity, and the expression of emotions (McLeod, 2019, p. 185). The goal of

gestalt is to increase awareness, freedom and self-direction. It is not future or past oriented but focus on the present moment. Gestalt therapy is one of several fields that often use creative techniques. Role-playing, the empty chair, music and drawing are often used. Regarding communication skills, the counsellor is aware of the client's body language, facial expressions, voice and gestures, that often are unconscious (McLeod, 2019). According to Kvalsund and Fikse (2017) the Gestalt approach is a belief that "if a picture is worth a thousand words, an experience is worth a thousand pictures. To facilitate learning, it is wise to create an experiential activity for every major (and minor) concept and application in Gestalt theory and methods" (Kvalsund & Fikse, 2017, p. 412).

Until the 1970s, counselling and psychotherapy were the fields in which the development of creative methods was most advanced (Thomas, 2017, p. 27). Later, the field of expressive arts therapies made the most important advances (Thomas, 2017, p. 27). Creative methods often take place outside of traditional counselling classes, for example, dance and movement therapy classes (Smith, 2011, p. 153). According to Thomas (2017, p. 27), creative methods are now often considered only as additional methods in counselling. Although it has been researched on the many benefits of using creativity in counselling, and there are ways to incorporate a creativity course into a counselling curriculum, there are only a few creativity courses in counsellor education programs (Smith, 2011, pp. 149-165). Some master's programs in counselling have begun to incorporate creativity courses and workshops, but they are usually found outside of traditional master's programs in counselling (Smith, 2011, pp. 149-165). According to Smith (2011, pp. 149-165), there is a lack of information in the literature about how more traditional counselling programs might design and implement a course to train students in the creative arts in counselling.

According to Angie Waliski (2009, pp. 375-385) expressive and creative techniques has recently got a greater awareness and acceptance, and now counsellor educators are faced with deciding if, when, and how to introduce these modalities in counsellor programs. Waliski (2009) uses these terms expressive techniques and creative techniques interchangeably, so one can assume they mean the same thing, but it is useful to show the examples that she lists: play, sand tray, art, bibliotherapy, narrative therapy, music, psychodrama and dance. Waliski (2009) says these are alternative methods to traditional talk therapy (Waliski, 2009, pp. 375-385). Waliski (2009) argues that the use of expressive/creative techniques is needed as "when counsellors are working with various clients, some find themselves exploring the use of expressive techniques when building rapport or when traditional methods prove ineffective" (Waliski, 2009, p. 375). The use of expressive techniques creates an "outlet for teaching and healing by assisting people in reframing ideas, shifting perspectives, externalizing emotions, and deepening the understanding of an experience" (Waliski, 2009, p. 375). Waliski (2009) describes in the article "an introduction to expressive and creative techniques for counsellors in training" how to introduce various expressive techniques to master's level counselling students, and according to her, it proved to be well received. The next chapter goes deeper into the research of Waliski (2009).

Thomas (2017, pp. 21-29) suggests developing a more inclusive framework for deeper integration of creative methods into counselling. The starting point for this can be found in expressive arts therapies and similar practices. Existing models in these therapies may have the potential to be adapted to counselling (Thomas, 2017, pp. 21-29). Thomas (2017, pp. 21-29) goes on to suggest that frameworks may be one step of

the way for counsellors to be expected to have competencies in creative techniques to facilitate therapeutic processes.

2.2.1 Earlier reserach on creativity in counselling

Waliski (2009, pp. 375-385) conducted a study on counsellors-in-training, in which they were introduced to expressive and creative techniques. As part of the study, counselling students received readings describing the use and effectiveness of various theories and techniques. They practiced the techniques and discussed the theories and techniques. Students also participated in an online chat where they discussed ideas about the topics before the lectures. Students practiced the techniques by taking on the roles of counsellor, client, and observer. The group then discussed their experiences and summarized what they had learned. To promote learning, the instructor used three open-ended statements, in which participants could express their "opinions: 1) give your description of the theory/technique, 2) give your thoughts about the use of the theory/technique, 3) give examples of clients that would benefit from this theory/technique and why."

The result of the study was that students showed an increased level of comfort and confidence, as after learning how to incorporate various techniques into their counselling practice (Waliski, 2009). One student said, "I feel that using expressive therapies in counselling can help me relating to the client". Students reported feeling "empowered" by learning the theory and techniques. "It also provided them with clarity about the counselling process, as many felt strong emotions as they participated in the hands-on activities. Waliski (2009, pp. 375-385) notes that there is a place for creative and expressive techniques in the counselling profession and continues to look for ways to provide evidence-based research for these methods. Last, Waliski (2009, p. 385) encourages counsellor educators to use their "knowledge, experience, and creativity to find ways to introduce these modalities to counsellors-in-training".

According to Schure, Christopher, and Christopher (2008, pp. 47-53), educators have recognized the importance of providing counsellors with self-care tools early in their careers or training (Schure et al., 2008, pp. 47-53). According to Schure et al., (2008, pp. 47-53) mental health professionals are particularly at risk for emotional exhaustion in addition to common sources of organizational stress. Compassion fatigue and vicarious traumatization are terms that are increasingly being used (Shure et al., 2008, pp. 47-53). Stress may have harmful effects on the effectiveness and success of the work of counsellors, by reducing their capacity for attention, concentration, and decision-making skills (Schure et al., 2008, pp. 47-53).

Schure et al., (2008, pp. 47-56) conducted a 4-year qualitative study examining the effects of teaching hatha yoga, meditation, and qigong on counselling students. The 15-week course focused on mindfulness-based stress reduction. Participants were taught three different mindfulness practices and expressed different preferences and different experiences. As a final journal assignment, participants were given four questions to answer in writing about how life has changes over the course, what the most interesting practise was, how the course has affected work with clients, and how they see themselves integrating, if at all, any of the practises from class into clinical practice.

Participants reported positive physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, and interpersonal changes and substantial effects on their counselling skills and therapeutic relationships (Schure et al., 2008, pp. 47-53). Most students indicated that they intended to incorporate mindfulness practices into their future careers (Schure et al., 2008, pp. 47-53). As Schure et al., (2008, pp. 47-56), concluded, mindfulness practice has the potential to transform counselling students in several ways. Among other things, it can help them respond less reactively to stressful or anxiety-provoking events, such as when clients are in crisis or talking about painful emotions. It is also conceivable that counselling students may learn a new way of relating to their emotional lives that involves awareness and tolerance. Rather than reacting with defensiveness and reactivity, the disciplines of mindfulness can help counsellors become more present and more intimately connected to themselves, their clients, and their supervisors (Schure et al., 2008, pp. 47-56).

2.3 Traditional counselling

This section explains more about traditional techniques and how they are used, to understand how they differ from creative techniques. The methods or techniques that often are used in traditional counselling, are often models, that the counsellor follows and guides the client through during the session. Counselling is more or less talk therapy, whereas creative approaches can be seen as more practical and use more creativity and fantasy. The next three techniques aim to provide examples of what is meant by "more traditional methods in counselling".

2.3.1 Career tool in career counselling

In career counselling, certain tools are commonly used to assess strengths, shift perspective or to clearer see which possibilities available. One such tool is "Profråd", a digital tool used to explore the clients' resources and opportunities in education and work life (Solberg, 2005, pp. 1-13). The client takes the test individually, before career counselling. The counsellor guides and facilitates reflection where the client is in focus. The goal is awareness and increased self-reflection in order to take conscious, meaningful, and future-oriented choices (Solberg, 2005, pp. 1-13).

2.3.2 Immunity to change model in leadership development

The immunity to change (ITC) model developed by Kegan and Lahey (2009), is often used by counsellors and coaches in leadership development (Reams, 2016, pp. 65-110). Immunity to change is an inability to change, because of deep-rooted assumptions and conflicting commitments (Reams, 2016, pp. 65-110). These may be so entrenched that they are unconscious. People can be very motivated to change everything from personal goals to professional aspirations, but to manage to change can be very difficult. Kegan and Lahey (2009) developed immunity to change to help people to overcome barriers, find new solutions, and embrace the change they want to make (Reams, 2016, pp. 65-110). The immunity to change model is a four column process the counsellor and client work through by talking. The four columns consist of "improvement goal", "behaviour inventory", "hidden competing", and "big assumptions". This process starts by outlining the client's commitment to an improvement goal, then it sketches out the things that he or she either doing or not doing that prevent progress towards the achievement goal (Kegan & Lahey 2009, in Reams, 2016, pp. 65-110).

2.3.3 The Grow model in coaching

The GROW model is a tool or method for structuring a coaching session, and is typically used in organizational coaching (Whitmore, 2017, pp. 95-101). It is a method for goal setting and problem solving. It has a set structure for the conversation and helps the client to think systematically. GROW stands for: Goal, Realism, Opportunities and Will. A typical question for goal setting could be "What is your ultimate goal?" (Whitmore, 2017, pp. 95-101). The next step is "realism". The client must clarify his/her status, where he or she is right now compared to his goal. According to Whitmore (2017, pp. 95-101), the coach can ask questions like "Where do you stand now in relation to your goal, on a scale from 1-10?". Opportunities are the third step in the GROW-model. This part is about finding the obstacles that could be the reasons why the client hasn't reached the goal yet, brainstorming ideas on how to move forward in the right direction. The coach can ask questions like, "How have you handled similar obstacles before?" (Whitmore, 2017, pp. 95-101). Will is the last step, to finally take action and make commitment to the goal. The coach can ask questions like, "When are you going to start?" (Whitmore, 2017, pp. 95-101). This four-step model helps counsellors in structuring the counselling session.

2.4   Creative techniques

To define what creative techniques are, creativity and fantasy must be defined. It is difficult to define what creativity really is. This is not to say that creativity has never been defined; there are many different definitions. One common definition state that creativity is based on two criteria: Creativity requires (a) novelty or originality and (b) utility or usefulness (Simonton, 2012 pp. 97-106). This means that an idea is creative if it is new and works. A three-criteria definition is "An idea is creative only if novelty, utility, and surprise can be attributed to it (Simonton, 2012 pp. 97-106). Fantasy, on the other hand, is the forming of mental images, imagining or fantasizing. It involves creating something that is not subject to any particular constraints.

It is difficult to decide what are creative techniques and what are not. Creative techniques can be many different things, such as drawing a picture as a starting point for a counseling session, fantasy travel - often referred to as guided imagery, using pictures to identify polarities in our personality, or using more complex models (such as the egg diagram used in psychosynthesis). There can always be a debate about what is creative and what is not. One thing to keep in mind is that creative techniques do not require that a person must be artistic. Creative approaches in counselling can simply be trying something different than sitting and talking about emotions, to rather approach these feelings, trying to stand in the emotions, connecting more with the "here and now".

Using creative techniques can be a way to "reach" the client. This idea is similar to what was mentioned in the history of creative methods chapter, where counsellors used music to "reach" their patients with war trauma. Morgan and Skovholt (1977, pp. 391-395) explain that the use of guided imagery can give the client the experience of sharing a deep part of themselves, but the use of symbols does not make the client feel embarrassed or "psychologically naked". In this way, the counsellor can use methods other than normal conversation to reach the client in a way that makes the client feel comfortable and in charge of the situation.

Creative techniques involve the use of creativity and imagination using problem solving skills. It can be said that all counseling work is creative because it involves

solving problems or helping others solve their problems. Creative thinking is problem solving, and sometimes it is difficult to solve problems. It can be beneficial to practice thinking creative to better be able to help others solve problems. Creative techniques can be used to improve problem-solving skills (more about this in chapter 2.4.1). Some creative techniques are described in more detail below.

2.4.1 Guided imagery

Guided imagery is a technique involving guiding the client to imagine planned scenarios. It is different from daydreaming, or free and spontaneous fantasies. Guided imagery is structured and guided by the counsellor. It usually begins with a relaxation exercise, so that the client is calm and focused, followed by the fantasy itself, and finally processing of the experience (Morgan & Skovholt, 1977, p. 393). Processing the experience is the most interesting part in this technique. The client can make important discoveries. Guided imagery can be about many things. For example, if the client needs to make a decision, guided imagination can consist of imagining a scenario in which the client tests how it feels to have made the decision.

Morgan and Skovholt (1977) found five categories of benefits of using guided fantasy/imagery. The first, is that it is fun, it is an entertaining and enjoyable technique for clients and counsellors. It is a pleasurable and novel alternative to more traditional career counselling methods (Morgan & Skovholt, 1977, p. 395). Second, it is safe, since the client's fantasy is a private experience, they can choose how much of it they want to share. The indirect expansion of emotions, goals, and beliefs is controlled by the client (Morgan & Skovholt, 1977, p. 395). Third, it allows for great sharing of feelings. It gives the experience of sharing a deep part of ourselves, yet through the use of symbols the technique prevents self-conscious, embarrassment or psychological nudity (Scheidler, 1972, in Morgan & Skovholt, 1977, p. 395). Fourth, it allows contact with oneself that is usually ignored or repressed. It varies how accepted daydreaming and fantasy has been. Some places it has been view as a neurotic trait, other places it has been accepted as it implies that one is capable of tuning into and using one's inner experiences for one's benefit – including enhancing creative problem-solving abilities (Morgan & Skovholt, 1977, p. 395). Fifth, it provides the counsellor with valuable data, the technique provides data that are valuable and sometimes difficult to obtain in other ways (Morgan & Skovholt, 1977, p. 395). Guided imagery can help bring awareness to unconscious material that is already influencing clients' decisions (Skovholt et al., 1989, p. 290). According to Marshall and Farrell (2019, p. 200), the use of guided imagery in career counselling could create a safe environment to see new possibilities, test options, and explore career choices (Marshall & Farrell, 2019, p. 200). Morgan and Skovholt (1977) says guided imagery/fantasy adds another dimension to career counselling. According to Skovholt et al., (1989, p. 291) another benefit is that counsellors enjoy using imagery in their work and often prefer it over more objective and rational data.

Morgan and Skovholt (1997) also found difficulties of using guided fantasy/imagery. According to them, the two which seem to occur are (a) not being able to "get into it" and (b) trying to make it *mean* something. They continue that their experience is those who "can't get into it" the first time, often succeed the second time after hearing of other people's experiences. Those who lead guided fantasy/imagery are typically concerned with the mechanics of the technique: the variety of relaxation exercises to choose from, voice quality, pacing, and fear of electing too much emotion from clients. Morgan and Skovholt (1977) add that participants usually automatically

filter out intense emotions, but counsellors should be prepared to deal with intense emotions. They continue that the greatest area of difficulty lies with own uncertainty related to own feelings of competence and the usefulness of guided fantasy/imagery. Learning about guided imagery can increase feelings of competence in counsellors. According to Skovholt et al., (1989, p. 290), guided imagery is not always successful, nor does it work for everyone on the first try. Richardson (1981) found that only 75% of the individuals could engage in the guided imagery process on a first attempt (Skovholt et al., 1989, pp. 287-292).

Leuner (1969) found that the use of guided affective imagery, a special type of guided imagery, was less dependent on the client's ability to verbalize their attitudes accurately than traditional methods. Skovholt et al. (1989, p. 290) describes that the advantages of guided imagination are that it is inexpensive, it is versatile because it can be used in any situation or location, it is safe, it can strengthen problem solving, and the client is in control.

According to Koziey and Andersen (1990, p. 68) a combination of narrative career theory and guided imagery can help clients reframe and change previous career assumptions, process feelings, and interact in the here and now (Koziey & Andersen, 1990, p. 68; Marshall & Farrell, 2019, p. 200). Marshall and Farrell (2019, p. 200) describe that guided imagery is useful, especially when clients seem "stuck" in one way of thinking, as guided imagery promotes divergent thinking and improves problem-solving skills.

2.4.2 Divergent and convergent thinking

Divergent and convergent thinking are critical for creative thinking (Buser et al., 2011, p. 267). Divergent thinking means to come up with many ideas or solutions to a problem (Buser et al., 2011, p. 267). Convergent thinking, on the other hand, means focusing on a limited number of options, analysing them, comparing them, or choosing the best solution to a problem (Buser et al., 2011, p. 268). Divergent and convergent thinking have been viewed as conflicting, because "creativity requires divergent thinking and problem solving requires convergent thinking, but the two are complementary and the two types of thinking interact in different ways" (Brophy, 1998, p. 144). Divergent thinking can be divided into four parts (FFOE): Fluency (number of ideas), Flexibility (variety of ideas), Originality (unique ideas), and Elaboration (putting ideas into practice) (Deacon, 2000, p. 67).

In counselling, counsellor and client work together to define and understand the problem (problem-finding), to seek many or various alternatives for change (fluency and flexibility), create new behaviours, emotions, or perspectives (originality), and implement these changes in everyday life (elaboration). According to Deacon (2000, p. 68), divergent thinking exercises, can be used to define the problem, broaden their perspective, and find alternatives for the counselling process. Counsellors can use this exercise to train their creativity to model divergent thinking and problem-solving strategies for their clients (Deacon, 2000, p. 68).

Divergent thinking exercises

According to Deacon (2000, p. 72), it is important to train counsellors to use their own creativity to help them access their clients' creativity and problem solving. There are tools to promote divergent thinking, for example "SCAMPER". SCAMPER is short for;

"substitute", "combine", "adapt", "magnify", "put to other uses" "eliminate," "rearrange." For each category, there are different questions. The goal of the SCAMPER tool is to foster creativity, develop new skills, consider different perspectives, analyze, and evaluate the therapy process (Deacon, 2000, p. 68). By training creativity, it is easier to access the client's creativity and problem solving (Deacon, 2000, p. 72). According to Deacon (2000, p. 72), divergent thinking exercises in supervision are a way to "ignite the creative flame" (Deacon, 2000, p. 72).

2.4.3 The empty-chair technique

The empty-chair technique stems from the gestalt counselling tradition (mentioned in chapter 2.2) and is the use of a two-chair dialogue (Bird & Johnson, 2020, p. 25). The empty-chair technique can allow the client to have an imaginary dialogue with someone or some part of themselves. This involves talking to parts of oneself or having an imaginary conversation with another person. For example, one chair may represent the client today and the other chair may represent someone they know, the client themselves 10 years from now, or a subpersonality. The client can use this method to resolve unfinished business with someone, for example a deceased relative. The client can talk to them and respond as their relative. The client takes one role when sitting and talks with the opposing perspective represented by the other chair. The client switches chairs and roles as needed. The counsellor's role is to facilitate the client's discovery. The empty-chair technique can be a good opportunity to practice having a difficult conversation with someone, or it can be a way to initiate an inner dialog in which we pit "our opposites" against each other. Using this technique, we can have a dialog with ourselves. On one chair the client puts a version of himself, for example the part that is angry, on the other chair he puts the part that wants to face the anger, in order to live a more productive, free and open life. The empty-chair technique is often used in a gestalt approach because it allows contact with the here and now. According to Bird and Johnson (2020, pp. 25-35) the techniques is meant to make the client process emotions by increasing emotional arousal and allowing them to make meaning out of their emotional experience.

2.4.4 Exploring subpersonalities

Subpersonalities are aspects of our personality of which we are not always aware of. A person can be for instance, both be playful and serious, both distinct personality traits, but being too playful or too serious can lead to an imbalance. Subpersonalities can be healthy and balancing, or they can be contradictory and unproductive (Kvalsund & Fikse, 2017, pp. 409-428). In counselling, and especially in psychosynthesis, it can be valuable to explore subpersonalities and the conflicts between them (Joseph Zinker in Kvalsund & Fikse, 2017, pp. 409-428). Exploring subpersonalities can be a way to understand conflict, because interpersonal conflicts can arise from conflicts of their own (Joseph Zinker in Kvalsund & Fikse, 2017, pp. 409-428).

This technique involves finding subpersonalities, called polarities, to explore in more detail and select images that represent two conflicting qualities, such as being spontaneous versus structured, or patient versus impatient. The client finds two polarities and selects two images that represent those polarities. The client places the pictures on a line and describes what these pictures illustrate. During the counselling session, the client is asked to move from one side to the other, while the counsellor asks questions such as: On this line, where are you today? How does it feel to stand where

you are now? Or: Where on this line would you most like to stand? (Joseph Zinker in Kvalsund & Fikse, 2017, pp. 409-428).

As it was mentioned earlier, it is difficult to distinguish which techniques or methods are creative, and which are not. I have classified the techniques I described above as creative. The different techniques offer different possibilities to the client. To summarize what the different techniques offer. Guided Imagery can be used in many different situations or contexts, can help make unconscious material conscious, can allow the client to try different options, such as different jobs in career counselling, and can also be used to gain a new perspective. In summary, divergent thinking exercises are a way to practice creative thinking. It can be especially beneficial for a counsellor to improve creative thinking in a creative profession. The empty chair technique can provide closure or new perspectives by having the client have a conversation with someone they cannot talk to, or with themselves. This is a good exercise to get in touch with the "here and now," i.e., to be present. Exploring subpersonalities gives the client the opportunity to focus on something they are not aware of, but which may be causing imbalance or even conflict. Guided imagery, divergent thinking exercises, the empty chair technique, and exploring subpersonalities, are all very different exercises that offer different possibilities, but have been chosen to show how different creative methods can be. In this study, three out of the four methods described above were used. Specifically, guided imagery, the empty chair technique, and exploring subpersonalities are exercises in various forms that counselling students were practising during the RAD3033 course.

3 Methodology

This chapter presents the methodological work used in this study, including background information about on decisions that were made during the study. The first section presents more details about the context: the course RAD3033, the reflection logs, and the triad exercises used in the course. Then an introduction to qualitative research and the phenomenological perspective is presented. The next sections focus on a detailed description of the process of recruiting participants, gathering data and analysing. Further, an explanation of the reasoning behind choosing reflection logs as method is explained and a closer look is taken at what reflection logs can bring to the study. Finally, an introduction to quality concepts used in this qualitative research study will be analysed before reflecting on my own role in the research and ethical considerations.

3.1 Context

In this chapter, I will provide a frame of reference for the study by describing the context, in which the participants are part of. First, I provide a short description of the master's program in counselling and then describe the course the participants are enrolled. Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) is a university in Norway that offers a master's program in counselling. This master's program in counselling at NTNU is the only master's program in Norway in counselling. The Master's in counselling builds on knowledge from pedagogy, psychology, philosophy, and sociology. In the master's program the general goal is for students to learn to facilitate growth, development, recovery, and innovation processes in a holistic and lifelong perspective at the individual, group, organizational and social level (NTNU, 2022).

RAD3033, called "System-oriented counselling in a relational, holistic and creative perspective", is a required course in the master's program. The pedagogical approach can be broken down into three components: lectures about theory, practical exercises, and reflection. The creative counselling/coaching exercises are called triad exercises, and consist of three roles: counsellor/coach, client/coachee, and observer. The course consists of six full days of lectures and triad exercises. After six days of lectures, students receive an eight-to-ten-page term paper. The course also included readings consisting of topics such as: gestalt, awareness, meditation, coaching, psychosynthesis, couples counselling and mindfulness. Class time was also spent reflecting together, by discussing and sharing thoughts and feelings about readings, lectures, and exercises. Students were encouraged to write reflection logs after every day of lecture, as part of their learning process. Reflection logs were shared in class the following day. Students received no direction on how long their reflection logs should be, and they could choose what triad exercise to write about.

According to the course description, there are several learning outcomes, skills and general competences that should be developed during the course (NTNU, 2022). The learning outcome is that students develop specialized knowledge of counselling theories that shed light on innovative, holistic, exploratory, and creative approaches and methods. Developing in-depth knowledge of the connection between the theory and practice of counselling in a systemic perspective, and that students will be able to

analyse and discuss how creative approaches in counselling, can contribute to growth and development (NTNU, 2022).

The skills students will develop during the course are the ability to implement creative counselling theories and methods in professional counselling contexts. They will also be able to apply creative approaches independently and in collaboration with others, and to facilitate experiential learning and exploration in a developmental and integrative perspective. Furthermore, students will be able to apply communication skills and have in-depth insight into the practical field of the counselling discipline and possible issues. Furthermore, they should be able to critically reflect and evaluate ethical aspects of the quality of the counselling relationship. Finally, they should be able to implement current creative development -and change activities (NTNU, 2022).

The general competencies that students develop during the course are to be able to analyse, apply and transfer knowledge and skills in creative development processes in general, and in different counselling settings (NTNU, 2022). The student can also analyse different counselling needs in a systems perspective and apply relevant creative methods; communicate and convey the value of creative knowledge and creative methods, that promote resource development of the individual and the systems to which the individual belongs (NTNU, 2022).

3.1.1 Triad exercises

Triad exercises are a central part of the pedagogical approach in the RAD3033 course. During the exercises, students took on the roles of counsellor/coach, client/coachee, and observer. Each student was able to try out each role during each exercise. There were many different triad exercises during the course. Some exercises lasted longer and were more detailed, while others were shorter. The triad exercises could take place in the classroom, other times the triads were in separate rooms. To give some examples of exercises that were done in the course: Drawings as a starting point, various exercises for contact with the "here and now", meditation with pictures, guided imagery/fantasy travel, images for exploring subpersonalities, music as a starting point, and the empty chair technique.

3.1.2 Reflection log as part of the learning process

In experience-based learning, practice should be followed by analytical reflection to promote good learning processes (Firing, 2004, p. 59). This line of thought is echoed in the RAD3033 course, among other places. Another example is Schure et al. (2008, pp. 47-53), who conducted a study with counsellors-in-training, in which they used journaling, similar as in RAD3033. It seems like that they had the same idea of combining something practical with analytical reflection to enhance learning. One of the questions in the last journaling was: "*How do you see yourself integrating, if at all, any of the practices from class into your clinical practice (or career plans)*". This question is about integrating something learned into practice, so that it is not forgotten.

In RAD3033, students are encouraged to write a reflection log after each lesson. Students received no direction on how long their reflection logs should be, and they could usually choose which experience or exercise to write about. During the first lecture, students are asked to write about their expectations for the semester. They are asked to finish writing a few sentences and answer some questions such as: "*My expectation for this course is*:" or "*What will it take to achieve this?*". Writing reflection logs after

completing a practice, such as a triad exercise, is often used to enhance learning (Firing, 2004, p. 59).

3.2 Qualitative research method

Qualitative research is about capturing meaning and experience that cannot be measured or counted (Dalland, 2017, p. 52). Qualitative research seeks to describe phenomena in context, interpreting processes or meanings, uses theoretically based concepts, and seeks understanding (Silverman, 2020, p. 6). According to Denzin and Lincoln (in Ospina, 2004, pp. 1-13) researchers using a qualitative approach study things in its natural setting, trying to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them. Quantitative research, on the other hand, seeks to generate data that allow numerical analysis, uses statistical calculations, use statistical software and pre-tested scales, seeks explanations and correlations (Silverman, 2020, p. 6).

The purpose of using a qualitative design in this study was to gain insight into the influence of a course on creativity in the master's program in counselling. As such, this study was about studying students in a natural setting, collecting reflection logs, that contain something they have an opinion about. Therefore, this study is about understanding a few rather than statistics about many. To seek detailed descriptions on the student's perspective of how they experience creative approaches in counselling.

There are many methods to research, for instance, interviews, observations, documents, or surveys (Furseth & Everett, 2020, pp. 140-145). In counselling, there can be several ways to do research and answer the same research question. In this study, the reflection logs are considered as the primary sources. A primary source is made when something has happened that is not interpreted by others. Those who write primary sources interpret the situation, the problems, the objects, and the context without having to be objective (Furseth & Everett, 2020, pp. 140-145). Primary sources are examined and analysed, where the quality of the data must be considered (Furseth & Everett, 2020, pp. 140-145). The primary source in this study is investigated and analysed, with particular attention to the quality of the reflection logs.

The research process is inspired by a step-by-step-deductive inductive (SDI) approach. The SDI model is about the process of working on a project, that follows a systematic structure. I have taken an inductive approach of collecting data, analysing it, and developing concepts or theories. This process does not have to be linear (Tjora, 2017). I started with the theory part at the beginning, but it has been a process of going back and forth.

3.2.1 Hermeneutic phenomenology

There are several perspectives from which to view research. It can be difficult to fully understand or grasp these perspectives. For this reason, I would like to say that my research is inspired by a hermeneutic phenomenological approach. This is a case study, which is about seeking to describe and explain a phenomenon, seeking understanding and gain deeper insight. The case study in this project is on one class of counselling students. This study is inspired by a hermeneutic phenomenological approach because the study looks for students' subjective experiences and thoughts about how they interpret and make meaning of their surroundings (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2017).

Specifically, this study is concerned with students' meanings and interpretations of a course on creative approaches in counselling.

According to Dalland (2017, p. 46), the hermeneutics are "humanistic oriented, and seeks to understand the basic conditions of human existence through human actions, expressions of life, and language". Hermeneutics is about interpretation; the attempt to find meaning in something or to explain something that is unclear (Dalland, 2017, p. 45). Phenomenology is the study of phenomena from a first-person perspective (Dalland, 2017, p. 45) which can be perceived through the senses. Reflection logs are an example of this. In the reflection logs, students write about an experience. The experience is the phenomenon, and the focus is on the student's perspective and interpretation. In writing the logs, students not only objectively describe something, but also show their interpretation. For example, for the triad exercises, students often include their thoughts about it or what they learned or understood from the experience.

3.3 Recruitment of participants

The method used to recruit participants was strategic selection (Thagaard, 2013) to ensure that participants could provide the information I am looking for in this study. Thus, the criterion for participation in this study, was that the participant was a first-year student of the master's program in counselling at NTNU and enrolled on the course RAD3033.

Recruitment of participants took place in the classroom of the course RAD3033. I asked the teachers if I could get a few minutes of class time to talk about my project. Not wanting them to be biased by my positive assessment of the course, I kept it short and simple and said that I was curious about their experiences of learning about creativity in counselling. I informed them how they could participate in the project, that their grades would not be affected by participation in this study, and that students could choose not to share their reflective logs, and not participate in this study.

Since I already knew many of the participants, it is debatable whether this influences the research. According to Tjora (2017), this can have both advantages and disadvantages. Knowing the participants may make them more willing to participate in the study, but on the other hand, they may write the logs differently than if they were submitting them to a complete stranger.

3.4 Data gathering

This study had 15 participants. The maximum number of logs was 7 per participant; one before the course began and one after each day of class. It varied how many logs each participant wrote and submitted, but 15 students participated in this study with one or more reflection logs. Students decided for themselves how long they wanted to write their reflection logs, which may influence the quality of the logs. When it comes to data gathering, students submitted their reflection logs, either as hard copy documents or as word documents sent by e-mail. I suggested turning logs in as hard copy documents, to ensure anonymity. Several students preferred to send it by e-mail. Quotes from the reflection logs are presented in the Results and Discussion chapter. The quotes were translated from Norwegian to English.

3.4.1 Reflective logs

Reflection logs can be described as both a learning tool and a method for gathering information (Firing, 2004). Reflection logs are often used in learning situations because it is a simple method to make people reflect on their experiences. This also makes reflection logs a valuable method for capturing people's reflections and experiences (Firing, 2004).

The next three paragraphs follow Firing's (2004) three components regarding reflection logs: Experience, reflection, and writing.

Experience

In this study, participants write logs describing their experiences and reflections. By experiences, I mean their experience about the course; learning theory, doing triad exercises, being in class, and talking with teachers and classmates. Students learn theory about a technique in lecture and will later test it out in practice. Learning and discovery often happen when doing something practical.

Reflection

Reflection is about formulating thoughts and questions and considering different perspectives. Reflection is closely related to the construction of experience. Reflection involves an activity or an experience, and the resulting consequences. It is on this basis, that the whole experience must be constructed (Firing, 2004, p. 60). So, when counselling students are asked about how they experience something, they need to reflect; formulate thoughts and considering different perspectives.

Writing

Writing is different from thinking, where you can have many thoughts and associations simultaneously. Writing forces you to be engaged in one thought at the time. Putting all thoughts on paper, can be like trying to catch a waterfall in a cup. According to Firing (2004, p. 68), the special nature of writing "is such a communication of meaning, that requires a clearer use of language, words, and grammar." This leads us to reconstruct experience; it transforms from something complex and multiple to something largely made up of concepts" (Firing, 2004, p. 65). Writing can also be a way to process feelings because writing give you the opportunity to put words to describe emotions (Firing, 2004, p. 68). Reflection is a part of the pedagogical approach in the course RAD3033, together with lectures about theory and practical exercises (NTNU, 2022).

3.4.2 The use of reflection logs in this study

During the first lecture, students were to write about their expectations for the semester. They will answer the following statements and questions: "*My desire for this semester is:*", "*My expectation for this class is:*", *What will it take to accomplish this*?", "*How can I contribute to this*?", "*What do I need from my classmates*?" and "*What do I need from the teachers*?". Then they were going to describe the situation, challenge or exercise, describe their reactions and discoveries in the situation, write a reflection on what this reaction or discovery means to them, and describe how this experience may contribute to their professional and personal development.

The design of the last reflection logs

The first and last reflection log contained specific questions to answer, the remaining five logs were open so the students could write freely. In the last reflection log, the participants got two questions to answer in their log. The first question was: *"What was your most positive experience of creative approaches in this class, and how do you describe this experience?* The second question was: *"What was your most challenging or difficult experience of using creative approaches in this class, and how would you describe this experience?".*

3.5   Analysis

This chapter describes the process of analysing data. Analysing qualitative data is the process of gathering, structuring, and interpreting the data to understand what it represents. The reflection logs with participants codenames were collected and saved in one word document, to be mixed and anonymized. The next step that follows is the coding process.

3.5.1 The coding process

During the coding process, I identified about fifteen key words or codes. These emerged from the data, though it was not within the scope of this thesis to go into detailed analysis of all of these. The codes that I found particularly interesting and worthy of further investigation, were collated into three main categories, in the later steps of the thematic analysis.

Braun and Clarke (2006, pp. 77-101) describe thematic analysis as a useful and flexible method for qualitative research. The phases of a thematic analysis are summarized in Table 1 by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 87). Further, I describe how I conducted the thematic analysis following these steps.

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the theme work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report if the analysis.

Table 1, Phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87).

First, I read through all reflection logs, to familiarize myself with the data, and to gain a general understanding of the data collected. While reading, I noted down a few thoughts. I reread the logs, while sorting the most relevant data into a three-column table in Word. The content in the reflection logs was mostly specific and relevant. I only had to cut the general description of the triad exercises, leaving the name of the triad exercise and a quote of their experiences. The first column of the table was for the nickname the participants gave themselves. The second column was for the quote from the logs, and the third column was for a code I found, fitting the described experience. The data were analyzed inductively, meaning that the themes or codes emerged from the data, and were not predetermined (Patton, 1987).

To give an example of how I coded: *"I wish to develop my creative side, even though the word creativity can seem frightening to me".* This quote I coded as "openness to learning." I could have coded it "resistance" because the participant showed resistance to creative techniques, but I focused on what the participant expressed they wanted to do. As I read, I noticed a few things that were repeated, such as being skeptical or afraid to go all in, being surprised at how effective the exercises can be, positive feelings after triad exercises, and not mastering every triad exercises.

I found some codes: positive and negative emotions, roles, learning and awareness, mastery, resistance, openness, and challenges. I gathered everything about each code to see what the students wrote about these topics. I saw that there was some overlapping, where quotes could be both mastery, positive emotions, and awareness. There was a pattern where participants mentioned openness and resistance in the same quote. I understood that the themes would be interrelated, and looked again to see a pattern in how often certain topics were mentioned. In the first reflection log, regarding the participants' expectations of the course, many mentioned that they wanted to develop more techniques, or tools for counseling. I put every code on each post-it notes and started to collate the codes into potential themes. I eventually found three categories: Possibilities, Challenges and Mastery.

After reading through the log material again, with those three categories as my basis for seeing how the participants talk about possibilities, challenges, and mastering. It was clear early in this process that the codes and categories were overlapping, they could be more than one code or category. I tried to code or categorize it by what the quote was mainly about. For instance, a quote could mention skepticism, but was mainly about openness to learning. Skepticism can be the same as openness, but at the other end of the scale, less openness to learning. Openness to learn and resistance could be on the same scale. The quotes I coded as openness to learning, were mainly described as positive experiences. And the experiences I coded as resistance, were mainly described as negative. The last step, phase 6 (Table 1), is producing the report: to select vivid, compelling extracts examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back to the analysis of the research question and literature, and producing a scholarly report of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 77-101). The process of making themes was an inductive process, where I used the data material to find themes or categories, rather than linking theoretical concepts to the empirical data. This phase is about relating back to the research question and the literature.

3.6   Quality in qualitative research

Quality standards in qualitative research are not the same as in quantitative research, where validity and reliability are often used. Qualitative research is conducted within a set of paradigms or ways of understanding the nature of reality and knowledge, each associated with different ways of defining, understanding, and reporting quality (Stenfors et al., 2020, pp. 596-599). Guba and Lincoln (1985, in Nowell et al., 2017, pp. 1-13) redefined the concept of trustworthiness by introducing the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, more on this below. For research to be recognized as trustworthy, researchers must demonstrate that the data analysis was conducted accurately, consistently, and exhaustively by recording, systematizing, and disclosing the methods of analysis with enough detail to allow the reader to determine whether the process is credible (Nowell et al., 2017, pp. 1-13).

3.6.1 Credibility

Credibility is about whether we as researchers have correctly understood participants' perceptions of reality. It is addressing the "fit" between the researcher's representation of the participants' views. Lincoln and Guba (1989, in Nowell et al., 2017, pp. 1-13) suggested several techniques to address credibility, including activities such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, member checking, data collection triangulation, and researcher triangulation. They also recommended peer debriefing to provide an external check on the research process, which can enhance credibility, and examining referential adequacy to check preliminary findings and interpretations against the raw data (Tobin & Begley, 2004, in Nowell et al., 2017, pp. 1-13).

Due to the scope of the thesis, it would be difficult to, for instance, do prolonged engagement or persistent observation. Member checking could have been done do address the fit between what my interpretations and the participants view. Member checking is about returning data or results to participants to check for accuracy and resonance with their experiences, to check if they are correctly understood. To ensure the credibility of this study, I used peer debriefing to provide an external check on the research process. Together with my supervisor, we looked at the raw data and searched for meaningful codes to represent what the quotes from the reflection logs were about. We also discussed the categories that emerged later, and I showed how I came up with the categories based on the findings from each category. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985, in Nowell et al., 2017, pp. 1-13) credibility is enhanced if the data are analysed by more than one researcher.

3.6.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the generalizability of the research. If the findings can be relevant or transferred to other contexts. In qualitative research, this concerns only case-to-case transfer (Nowell et al., 2017, pp. 1-13). The researcher cannot know the sites that may wish to transfer the findings; however, the researcher is responsible for providing thick descriptions, so that those who seek to transfer the findings to their own site, can judge transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, in Nowell et al., 2017, pp. 1-13). When it comes to transferability, it is important for the researcher to detail the data gathering and analysis, as well as the context in which the data were collected. In this study, I have been transparent in my decisions regarding the data gathering and analysis process, and I have described the research context in detail, for example, the course RAD3033. I hope that this will enable readers to judge the transferability for themselves.

3.6.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the process of ensuring that the research process is logical, traceable, and clearly documented (Tobin & Begley, 2004, in Nowell et al., 2017, pp. 1-13). This makes the reader able to follow and examine the research process, to judge the dependability of the research by themselves (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, in Nowell et al., 2017, p. 1-13). One way that a research study may demonstrate dependability is for its process to be audited (Koch, 1994, in Nowell et al., 2017, pp. 1-13), which means that a supervisor or a college can be used as corrective. According to Halpren (1983, in Nowell et al., 2017, pp. 1-13) keeping records of raw data, field notes, transcripts, and a reflective journal can help researchers systematize, relate, and cross-reference data, as well as making the process of reporting easier. All this makes a clear audit trail. The aim has been to make the process so detailed that another researcher can easily follow my train of thought. It has been on my mind from the beginning of the study to make the research transparent and traceable.

3.6.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is about transparency, showing that the researcher's interpretations and findings are clearly derived from the data. The researcher must show how the conclusions and interpretations were reached (Tobin & Begley, 2004, in Nowell et al., 2017, pp. 1-13). According to Guba and Lincoln (1989, in Nowell et al., 2017), confirmability is established when credibility, transferability, and dependability are all achieved. Koch (1994, in Nowell et al., 2017) recommended that researchers include markers, such as the reasons for theoretical, methodological, and analytic decisions throughout the study, so others can understand how and why the decisions were made.

During the first steps in the thematic analysis, I made sure to collect all relevant information in the reflection logs, both the positive and negative experiences of the creative approach in counselling, before I continued the analysis. During the analysis, I discussed with my supervisor how I was thinking and what considerations I made when forming the categories and presented the findings behind the choices.

3.7 My role as a reseracher

In evaluating the quality of my master's thesis, it becomes relevant to look more closely at my own role as a researcher, and how this may have affected the results. I am conducting research in my own study setting, on students I know, and this can present both opportunities and challenges. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2017), a researcher should be aware of his or her assumptions, experiences, opinions, and own knowledge about the phenomenon under study.

I am a master's student in counselling, and I have taken the course RAD3033, which means that I am well acquainted with this topic and have the whole experience of participating in the course. Although personal interests and experiences can strengthen one's research, by providing access and knowledge of the field, there are also some challenges in how one can be biased. When choosing the project topic, I chose one that I was interested in and curious about. I had some good experiences with creative approaches in counselling and could see potential in the techniques. I could also imagine the negative sides; I experienced, for example, that visualization could be demanding, that some exercises required total concentration, and that many of my fellow students were sceptical or demotivated at first. I think that having the experience of going

through the same process as the participants, has made me get a better understanding of the experience. At the same time, I must be careful not to think I know or have understood how everyone else experience it. I must keep my mind open and curious.

I was aware of my interests from the beginning of the project, and how they might influence my research, but I was also open and curious what the findings might be. This curiosity led me to be open to explore, and to be eager to complete the project. I tried to be transparent and neutral during the project. I tried to remain neutral when talking to potential participants about my project. The participants might describe me as a creative person, but I hope this has not affected the way they write the reflection logs. I imagine, using reflection logs as data material, I achieve sufficient distance from the participants, and maybe affect them less, than I would using another method in the study.

3.8   Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations should be kept in mind throughout the project, from start to finish. These considerations are guidelines and principles that determine how the researcher should conduct his or her work to ensure that participants experience no harm by partaking in the project (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2017). This study involves research on human subjects and is therefore registered with the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) for approval. The study has been approved by NSD (see appendix 2). When recruiting participants, participants were informed in an information letter about the aims of the master's thesis, the research question, the method used and about confidentiality and anonymity. The participants were also informed that they could request further information, and the right to withdraw from the study at any time (see appendix 1). The informed consent form was given with the information letter, which all the participants signed and returned to me. Confidentiality is also that private data that identifies the informants cannot be revealed (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2017). The anonymisation is maintained both in the study itself, but also in the stored material from the data gathering and coding process.

4 Results & Discussion

This chapter aims to answer the following research question: *How do counselling students experience using creative approaches in counselling?* The chapter focuses on how the participants of the study describe and interpret their experiences in the reflection logs. By experience, meaning an activity in which a person gathers knowledge, opinions, and skills. The chapter presents the themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of the data material. First the main theme is presented, then subcategories are presented with findings, the findings are interpreted and discussed up against theory and previous research. Under each subcategory the findings are presented, which are referred to as quotes from the reflection logs. The three main categories are: 1. Possibilities, 2. Challenges and 3. Mastery.

Counselling students experienced:		
1. Discovering many possibilities in using creative approaches	**2. Challenges in using creative approaches**	**3. Mastery in using creative approaches**
- Potential for creative techniques - Creative techniques as specific tools - Change of perspective - Counteracting psychological nudity - Openness to learning	- Resistance - Negative experiences -Psychological noise	- Sense of achievement - Positive experiences - Development and adaptability

Table 2: Presentation of an overall of the findings.

The categories with subcategories represent the main findings in this study and is part of answering the research question "*How do counselling students experience using creative approaches in counselling?*".

4.1 Possibilities

Possibilities is about the wide variety of opportunities offered by creative approaches to counselling. This category consists of subtopics such as: Potential of creative techniques, changing perspectives, counteracting psychological nudity, and openness to learning. All these subtopics are distinct yet interrelated.

4.1.1 Potential of creative techniques

In the reflection logs, participants frequently described the potential they saw in specific creative methods. They described how these methods could be used in different settings, how they could develop more skills and offer more techniques to their clients, and how they could integrate body, mind, and thoughts into counselling. This was expressed in several ways.

One participant wrote:

"It is only the imagination that is stopping us when it comes to what we can do as counsellors".

This quote fits the headline in this topic in that there is a lot of potential in creative methods, that often involve the use of imagination.

A couple of participants said that creative methods have the potential to let the client be in charge of the counselling situation. This becomes clear in this quote:

"Creates structure out of the conversation, even if you use some abstract tools. Allow the client to decide what they want to talk about. For example, when using drawing: you have drawn this, is there something that stands out for you that you want to start with?".

The potential is that creative methods allow us to use our imagination in counselling, and allow the client to be in charge of the process. This is consistent with previous research, in which Skovholt et al. (1989, p. 290), who described many benefits of using creative techniques, in this case guided imagery. According to Skovholt et al. (1989, p. 290), the advantages of guided imagination are that it is inexpensive, versatile because it can be used in any situation and place, it is safe, it can strengthen problem solving, and the client is in control. This is also related to the existential-humanistic approach, where the client is given control, because he/she has the power and influence to affect the world and determine his/her own destiny (Ivey et al., 2012, p. 366). It seems that by using these techniques participants described, gave them control over the process of solving their own problems.

Another potential of creative methods is the possibility of involving all parts of us as human beings in counselling; creative and holistic approaches focus on using body, emotions, and thoughts in counselling. The Gestalt approach, as mentioned in chapter 2.1, uses this mindset. The next quote also describes the potential of a wide range of exercises and procedures the counsellor can choose from.

"One of the things I take with me is how to include both body, emotions and thoughts in counselling. Creative methods can help to include all parts of us as human beings. It has also dawned on me how great a variety of creative approaches there are, which means that as a counsellor you have a wide range of exercises and procedures to choose from."

What many described as positive, is the opportunity to learn and practice many different techniques. Some also wrote that after having practised these different techniques, they feel more comfortable in the role as counsellors. This is similar to an earlier study, in which Waliski (2009, pp. 375-385) studied counsellors-in-training, where it was found that the participants felt more comfortable and confident after learning expressive therapies. Students also reported feeling empowered by learning the theory and techniques.

This is illustrated in this quote:

"Along the way, I have tried and explored various methods that can be used as a tool in conversations. I do not know if it is because I have become confident in

myself, or if I have gained a greater understanding that makes me feel more
robust to explore the creative. The creative contributes to playfulness, openness
and clarity for many."

Another participant expressed something similar:

"During the exercise I discovered how much I was physically affected by having to
move from one side of the scale to the opposite side of the scale, so much so that I
almost needed to support myself against the wall. And [I discovered] how natural
it felt to take a step back. After being challenged to do it again, it was experienced
more as mastery."

In this quote the participant describes experiencing strong emotions while doing
the exercise. This can be related to what Waliski (2009, pp. 375-385) found, where
students reacted similarly when exposed to similar situations, such as hands-on
activities.

4.1.2 Creative techniques as specific tools

Some people may think that creative techniques are abstract in nature. The findings
suggest, however, that a creative approach offers specific tools, that make the
conversation even more specific; the counsellor and client recognize that they are talking
about the same thing, that they quickly achieve a common understanding. This may be
compared to traditional counselling, where it is common that the counsellor builds report
frequently, to make sure they are "on the same page" in the process. Several
participants wrote that the exercises "offer a simplification of complex processes", "are
helpful tools in the conversation", and "excellent tools to make the client reflect". In the
next quote, one participant wrote about an experience of using drawing in an exercise:

"I think this exercise was great because I got to put my thoughts and feelings
down on paper and it made them a bit more at distance. I also think it made it
easier to talk about afterwards because I could refer to the drawing to explain
how I thought and felt about the subject."

Another participant described it in a similar way:

"Having a drawing to refer to and explain by opened up exciting and somewhat
"deeper" conversations because you could talk a little more abstract, but with a
picture on it because the client had tried to illustrate it with a drawing. I realized
that there was a lot to talk about when working from a drawing".

This participant found that using a drawing made by the client, was a very effective start
of the counselling session. It made the conversation exciting and a little more in-depth.
They were able to talk abstractly, yet very specifically about the matters, because there
was a picture to refer to. He or she also expressed surprise, at how well the conversation
opened; there was a lot to talk about because of the drawing.

Another participant wrote:

"As a counsellor, I was able to bring back elements from the drawing/picture to
get the client to continue to explore, explain and put into words the feeling,

> *continue to have the "here and now" contact. As a client, I experienced that it was*
> *nice to have a picture or drawing as it made it easier to explain and elaborate on*
> *the meaning behind it. I also think this can be something to have on hand as a*
> *counsellor to bring out when the client is having trouble putting things into words,*
> *is stressed, or similar".*

It is interesting that the participant mentions this; that drawing/picture made it easier to explain the meaning behind it. That it might be something to have on hand as a counsellor, to bring out when the client has difficulty putting things into words or is stressed. This is similar to what Leuner (1969) found, that the use of guided affective imagery was less dependent on the client's ability to verbalize their attitudes accurately, than traditional methods. Following the thought mentioned earlier, that it is not given that the client is always able to express himself or herself properly by talking, it is not always easy to find the right words to express your inner feelings and sincere opinions. Many people are not used to keep the focus on themselves, and their thoughts and feelings to be the centre of attention, as you are supposed to do in a counselling situation. Leuner (1969) did research on guided affective imagery, but it may be related to this case as drawing is another creative method, both differing from more traditional methods. These findings and earlier research suggest that creative methods give clients other ways of expressing themselves.

Another example of creative methods/techniques being used as specific tools can be found in the next quote, where a participant writes about the empty chair technique:

> *"I felt good because I could use my imagination and felt comfortable doing so. I*
> *think it was important for me to physically move from chair to chair and that I*
> *could say things to another part of me. I think it has value because I think it can be*
> *a very clear signal to the body to "shift" insight. Sometimes I have a lot of*
> *thoughts in my head and it's just chaos. When I talk about them in this way, it*
> *creates more order."*

This quote describes that the participant found the exercise to be specific and that it was helpful to change chairs during the exercise. Changing chairs was a clear signal to "change insight" as the participants said. This exercise had the advantage of bringing more order to the thoughts and sorting out the experience of complete chaos.

4.1.3 Change of perspective

Participants often described that these exercises helped them to put difficult feelings into words, and opened for new perspectives of their challenges or problems. They described that using creative methods gave them a chance to see things from a different perspective and made them more aware.

One participant wrote:

> *"I liked the exercise because it made me reflect on areas that may have been a*
> *little unconscious".*

This is similar to what is mentioned earlier; that creative techniques are used to access and work with aspects of the self, that are hidden from conscious awareness (Thomas, 2017, pp. 21-29). Furthermore, the use of creativity in counselling has been described as a way to bring thoughts and feelings into awareness (Gladding, 2008, pp. 97-104). This

topic is closely related to the subchapter "creative methods as specific tools". The topics are closely related as many participants describe change of perspective and creative methods as specific tools in the same quote.

One participant said, in the context of using the empty-chair technique:

> *"When I sat in the chair of my inner critic, it dawned on me how bad things I can come up with to say to myself - like "you are stupid, you should not have said that, now you are going to lose all your friends if you are not aware". These are things I would never say to others, but which I allow myself to say to myself. This was very clearly illustrated to me through the exercise".*

This is one of many examples of participants gaining insights through a change in perspective. The empty chair technique can be a good exercise to gain a better perspective, because the client must change chairs and answer to a person, a subpersonality, or themselves that is imagined in the future; or whoever they imagined to be placed in that chair. It seems that many participants have come to new insights or discoveries through this exercise. This can be related to the theory about problem-solving, mentioned in Chapter 1. That creative thinking involves problem-solving. To see the problem from a different perspective is a way of problem-solving. The findings suggest that creative techniques offer problem-solving.

Another example of a change in perspective and new discoveries, is this quote, where a participant wrote about exploring subpersonalities:

> *"The question "What do the two subpersonalities give you?" really got me thinking. At first, I thought one was almost exclusively positive, while the other was negative. The question and the sweet drawing of something I associated with something negative made me see new sides of myself."*

This describes a discovery made by a participant in the role of client, when he or she found that a subpersonality trait was not exclusively negative or positive. There appeared to be several nuances of both positive and negative sides. Perhaps both sides were necessary, and a balance between them was healthy. Subpersonalities can be healthy and balancing, or they can be contradictory and unproductive (Kvalsund & Fikse, 2017, pp. 409-428). This can be related to Waliskis (2009) research, where it was found that the use of expressive and creative techniques assists people in "reframing ideas, shifting perspectives, externalizing emotions, and deepening the understanding of an experience" (Waliski, 2009, p. 375).

4.1.4 Counteract psychological nudity

To be "psychologically naked" means to feel exposed and vulnerable, after sharing personal matters. (Morgan & Skovholt, 1977, p. 291). This is described as a negative feeling. A common way to begin a counselling session, especially in an existential-humanistic approach, is to inform the client of several things, such as that the client is in control and decides how much to share, and most important an agreement of client confidentiality. If creative methods can counteract psychological nudity, that is a positive finding. Participants often wrote about how the creative approach in counselling can offer symbols or other things that allow the client to take some distance in some ways, but also to stand in the emotions and experience the emotions, rather than just talk about them. This is similar to the findings of Scheidler (1972 in Morgan & Skovholt, 1977, p.

395) who found that guided imagery can provide the experience of sharing on a deep level, but through the use of symbols that prevents self-consciousness, embarrassment or psychological nudity.

One student expressed the following:

> *"Drawing helped me to identify different themes, but at the same time distancing me from situations. I was able to distance myself and think about different perspectives and points of view. I was able to cry and become comfortable with it. It gave me peace of mind to look at my challenges as an opportunity to grow. Drawings can be an important tool to explore other issues."*

This part of a reflection log written by a student about drawing, may indicate that creative methods offer a way to stand by difficult emotions, and feel comfortable doing so, as opposed to feeling psychologically naked. The participant describes a positive experience where drawing was an important tool to explore and develop.

This is similar to what another student wrote:

> *"I came to a deeper level in the conversation, but in a more positive way than before. It was inspiring and encouraging."*

The feeling of psychological nudity is described as negative. Participants mentioned that they got to a deeper level in the conversation, but in a more positive way than before, by exposing themselves in some degree in this exercise. Experiences like these could be related to psychological nudity. My interpretation of the findings is that creative methods may counteract psychological nudity. The participants never mentioned the term "psychological nudity", but my findings in the reflection logs, relates to previous research, suggesting that creative methods can counteract psychological nudity.

4.1.5 Openness to learning

As I read the reflection logs, I coded some of them as "openness to learning". Specifically, I recognized the ability and willingness to learn, to be open to the unknown and to defy resistance. It can be an ability to "Diving into the unknown". Similar to open-mindedness, which means being willing to consider new ideas, without too much prejudice. I also recognized a willingness to overcome preconceptions. I noticed that openness to learning and resistance were two things that were often mentioned within the same sentence in the reflection logs. Many participants mentioned that they really wanted to challenge themselves and dare to try creative methods in counselling. Some students mentioned that they wanted to be open-minded to consider using creative methods when necessary. Several participants mentioned that they were skeptical or thought creative methods were difficult to execute or perform.

One participant expressed the following:

> *"My wish for this course is that I want to challenge myself in the creative part of the subject. This is because I have always found this to be difficult. My expectations for the course are that it seems exciting and challenging to me. I need to be open and receptive."*

This was written before the course started, and many participants have made similar statements. It seems to me that at that time they already had expectations that the course was going to be challenging, that the theme of the course was new and unknown

to them, and that they needed to be open-minded about what the course was all about. Perhaps it was positive that students were prepared to be open-minded and make an effort, as the course is interactive, and the students must participate actively.

Another participant expressed something similar:

> *"I want to develop the creative approach, even though the word "creative" seems scary to me. I need to be open to new and unfamiliar ways of doing things, even if something feels strange."*

It seems to me that many participants have different attitudes and associations with the term creativity. One way to change attitudes is through learning. Creativity are something that many people have associations with. However, there are many misconceptions about these terms. It is a common belief that being creative has something to do with artistic abilities. As I mentioned in the theory chapter, and as one student put it, "Being creative can mean so many things." Creativity is mainly about problem solving. A way of thinking. This is central to the role of the counsellor. The counsellor needs to offer the client alternatives for reflections and change in some way. In an existentialist-humanist approach, the counsellor should not give advice, but facilitate a process in which the client can figure things out for themselves, preferably with some sense of control and self-determination. If counsellors feel stuck in this process, it may be because they are unable to "think outside the box", and offer their clients alternatives for change (Deacon, 2000, p. 68).

At the end of the course, one student expressed:

> *"For me, the most positive experience was that there was development over time. From the beginning of the course, I had a critical eye, but at the same time I knew that I wanted to be open to testing different creative approaches in counseling".*

As I mentioned earlier, expressing both openness to learn and resistance were often expressed within the same sentence. Here the participant uses the words "critical eye", while he/she expresses a desire to be open to testing creative approaches in counselling.

4.2 Challenges

Challenges are about the challenging experiences participants had while learning creative methods in counselling. These are the things that affect the effectiveness of the creative techniques. This category consists of the subtopics: Resistance versus openness, negative experiences and psychological noise.

4.2.1 Resistance

In the subcategory "openness to learning", I mentioned that while reading the reflection logs, I noticed an openness to learn; an ability and desire to learn and to dive into the unknown. I also recognised scepticism, and resistance to explore. These contradictions were often found in the same sentence, in which I found interesting. Hartman and Zimberoff (2004, p. 3) conceptualize resistance as an imbalance between Eros (energy of attraction and openness to life and growth) and Thanatos (energy of withdrawal, disintegration, and resistance to life and growth). In this sense, resistance can be said to be the other end of openness to learning. According to Hartman and Zimberoff (2004,

pp. 3-63), resistance is a universal human trait, because we are all resistant to certain things at times. Both the counsellor and the client can experience resistance. Resistance may prevent the counsellor from trying an exercise that could be beneficial for the client, because he or she does not feel confident enough to initiate it. Resistance in any counselling can be that the client resists considering the counsellor's suggestions. Resistance keeps someone from reaching their highest potential, and it can take many forms. Hartman and Zimberoff (2004, pp. 3-63) lists three primary defensive strategies to resist life, rather than fully embrace it: Avoidance, ambivalence, and control. Below is an example of a client, who may have felt resistance during a fantasy travel exercise:

> *"In the triad exercise, I experienced, as a counsellor, that my client had not benefited from the fantasy travel and had chosen to disconnect, and rather do other things during the exercise. In similar exercises before, the client had experienced that this type of exercise did not make sense and that these types of visualization and breathing exercises were energy-losing rather than energizing for the client. As a counsellor, I therefore decided to ask the client if he wanted us to focus on something other than the actual fantasy travel in our conversation. This was an attempt to meet the client where he was. I felt that this was meaningful, and the client also expressed afterwards that he had felt taken care of and met in the situation. To me, this symbolizes that we all have different needs and that you as a counsellor must be open to change direction and adjust in meeting the client."*

Here the counsellor noticed that the client showed resistance, because he disconnected and started doing other things. The client had tried similar exercises before, without success and found them energy draining rather than energising. It can be helpful to reflect on why this resistance occurred. Perhaps the client experienced losing control through such an exercise, or that there were psychological noise factors (described in Chapter 4.2.3); factors that intervene, for example the client was tired after a long day and did not feel open at that moment, did not trust the counsellor. There can be many reasons, superficial or deeper rooted.

In the reflection logs several participants mentioned that they were skeptical of creative techniques, that they felt unable to perform some exercises, that they were not creative, or that some techniques were not for them. This may have to do with resistance. If a client is not ready to improve their life and make changes, they may resist the counsellor's suggestions and prefer to talk about more trivial things that are easier to talk about. If a counselling student is tired one day and does not feel like engaging too much in an interactive lesson, it is easier to laugh and say that an exercise is silly. "Diving into the unknown" by trying new exercises that require you to put yourself out there can be exhausting.

As one student illustrated:

> *"What was most difficult and demanding was having faith in the exercises and the process. It's something I'm not used to before, so it seemed very strange. It was easiest to just laugh it off, but since everyone in the class was keen to give it a*

try and take it seriously, I allowed myself to throw myself into the tasks and take it
seriously."

Here, the participant describes feeling a resistance to go all in and try something that feels unknown and strange. As the participant writes; it would be easier to laugh about it than to dare and try it. The participant shows resistance, but also openness, because he or she manages to put aside the prejudices and make an honest attempt.

One participant illustrated this point:

> *"After today, I almost feel empty. After working on exercises about big questions*
> *of life, I notice that I am tired. I am not used to thinking about so many big topics,*
> *it feels a little overwhelming. Still, I feel inspired, and I see great potential to work*
> *in counselling in different creative ways. I also think that the fact that I am tired*
> *means that I have reflected a lot during the different exercises."*

This can illustrate that creative techniques can be demanding; it takes something to put yourself out there and try both new techniques and techniques of this matter. It must be easier to follow a model with set questions, for instance the GROW model. This model has several questions for each step, it is a model that helps the counsellor to structure the conversation. Lastly, it is also important to keep in mind that the RAD3033 course is an introduction course to creativity in counselling and a second course on creativity might feel less challenging.

4.2.2 Negative experiences

These findings refer to the negative experiences participants expressed about creative methods. Participants sometimes expressed that the exercises were difficult to perform, that they did not succeed in doing the exercise, that it was sometimes hard to focus and believe in a positive effect.

One participant expressed:

> *"What I found most difficult in using creative methods was feeling that I could not*
> *do it, for example, I found drawing very difficult and was frustrated that I could*
> *not "master" it or that it did not work for me. At the same time, I realized that not*
> *all exercises are for everyone. It has been demanding to find the motivation to try*
> *all the exercises when you feel like it's not working. However, I have had some*
> *good experiences in the process."*

This was written in the last reflection log, where participants were asked to write about the most difficult or challenging part of the course. Here, the participant expressed several factors that implied how successful the methods were. This can be compared with the findings of Skovholt et al., (1989, p. 290) that 75% of the participants could engage in the guided imagery process on a first attempt. One can ask if one does not succeed at the first attempt, does it mean that the technique in ineffective? Maybe this means that practise is required.

According to Morgan and Skovholt (1977, p. 395) one of the difficulties of using guided imagery/fantasy is that the person is not being able to "get into it". They add that the greatest area of difficulty lies in our own uncertainty related in our own feelings of

competence and the usefulness of guided fantasy/imagery. They also add that learning the technique can increase feelings of competence among counsellors. In the RAD3033 course, participants got the chance to try the same technique several times, with small variations. It is important to keep in mind that practise makes perfect. If a counsellor student has a negative experience with creative techniques, it can be a valuable lesson, because you have tried the techniques as a client. This means that you may recognise where the client is in the process and support them.

One participant addressed this challenge:

> *"The most difficult part of using creative methods must be the uncertainty of how*
> *I should relate to and use the various techniques that were introduced to us.*
> *When you are not used to using creative methods, it is also challenging to use*
> *them as a counsellor. It was also challenging to be a counsellor for a client who*
> *did not benefit from the exercises we did. It was difficult to know how to use the*
> *creative when the client himself did not engage in the creative approach."*

Here the participant describes the most challenging part of using creative methods. The participant writes about an uncertainty about how to use the new techniques. This can be related to what was discussed earlier about one's own uncertainty related to competency and usefulness. It is important that the counsellor feels comfortable leading a creative exercise and believes in the methods. It is an important part of the learning process, to adapt techniques that you like and believe in.

4.2.3 Psychological noise

"Psychological noise" is used to describe the findings where the disruptive factors mentioned by the participants could hamper the implementation and success of creativity techniques. I have characterized the following factors as "psychological noise"; lack of focus and motivation, being tired and having prejudice to the exercises. Low self-esteem and defensive feelings can also be referred to as "noise" and interfere with the success of the techniques. That also includes any previous failed attempts with similar techniques. For example, if you are unfocused or tired after a long day, or feel unmotivated because the techniques have not worked in the past, it is difficult to motivate yourself to try again. Clients who do not engage with the exercises because of resistance, prejudice, or defensive feelings often have trouble in succeeding with these techniques.

As one participant illustrated:

> *"We did a fantasy travel at the end of the day. I fell out of the exercises a bit, so*
> *the exercise did not do much for me. It also became unnatural for me, who is not*
> *so good at imagination. I imagined a path that I know well and there are no*
> *mountains there. This became something I got hung up on because the*
> *introduction of a mountain ruined the image, I had in my head... "*

Here, the participant did a guided imagery exercise and was asked to first imagine a path well known, and then walk up a mountain. The path the participant imagined had no mountain. He or she got stuck on this detail and fell out of the exercise. This is an example of an exercise that did not suit the person in that moment. Sometimes you must practise to make it work. If this were an individual counselling session, the client (in this case the participant), could give feedback to the counsellor, and the counsellor could find an exercise that is more suitable.

Another participant said something similar:

> *"This exercise did not really work for me because I zoomed out. What happened was that I was in three different places without seeing any connection between the places."*

Several students seem to have had a similar experience regarding the guided imagery/fantasy travel. This finding agrees with the findings of Skovholt et al., (1989, p. 290), according to which 75% of the participants were able to engage in the guided imagery process on the first attempt.

One participant expressed:

> *"I think it was interesting to hear about others' experiences related to the exercises, how some absolutely did not think it gave anything, while others thought it could be very valuable".*

This quote shows that not all exercises give clients (in this case participants) what they need. This suggests that a counsellor must have a variety of methods and skills to avoid psychological noise.

4.3 Mastery

Mastery is the possession or display of great skill, technique, or knowledge that makes one the master of a subject (Merriam-Webster, 2022). Mastery is a pretentious term because mastery describes the highest level or outstanding skill. Counselling students are not yet masters of the subject of creativity in counselling, but mastery is used here as a term for achievement, meaningful experiences, positive emotions, development and adaptability. This category consists of the subtopics: Sense of achievement, meaningful experiences, positive emotions, and development and adaptability.

4.3.1 Sense of achievement

Sense of achievement is a proud feeling of having done something difficult and worthwhile (Merriam-Webster, 2021). An example of this would be repairing the car by yourself and getting a real sense of achievement. Many participants wrote about the positive feeling after using creative methods, and this can be linked to the sense of achievement. I saw a link to the term sense of achievement when participants wrote about defeating challenges, getting good feedback and seeing how effective the exercises were for the client. When you are feeling a sense of achievement, you feel like you have accomplished something, and an accomplishment can feel like you are making a positive step forward, and you might naturally feel more engaged and more motivated to feel that way again. To get positive feedback must be important in relation to the feeling of achievement, that your hard work is recognised because you have achieved something.

As a participant described when writing about expectations of the course:

> *"...but I also expect that it will require a lot of personal work to be able to experience accomplishment".*

Here the participant acknowledges that it requires hard work to get the sense of accomplishment.

One participant wrote:

*"Something that was nice today was that I again received support and feedback
on my counselling skills which seemed uplifting and supportive. In a learning
environment like the one we have, it is allowed to try and fail, which allows me to
develop further. This is a good feeling and is something I am grateful for".*

What this participant describe is that he or she got support and feedback after a counselling session. They use the word "uplifting", which can mean that they found it motivating. They also write about development, which can be interpreted as feedback and support. Feedback and support are important for development. This can be related to sense of achievement, where feedback is valuable to recognize hard work.

One participant expressed:

*"When I tried to be a counsellor in the "empty-chair", I felt a joy that I was open to
the creative, and I receiving good feedback on the job I did gave me a sense of
accomplishment."*

Here, the participant describes a joy of being open to the creative and getting good feedback after hard work. Participants often describe that they enjoy the exercises they master.

Another example on this is showed below, where a participant describes exploring subpersonalities (see 2.4.4) by using pictures.

*"This was an exercise I really enjoyed. I was able to describe my feelings
connected to the pictures, and I could move back and forth on the line between
the pictures in the conversation."*

In the quote above, the participant describes that he or she enjoyed an exercise as a client. According to Buser et al., (2011, p. 257), clients become more engaged in the counselling process, because they naturally enjoy creative activities. This agrees with one of the benefits Morgan and Skovholt (1977, p. 395) found in using guided fantasy/imagery that it is fun, entertaining, and enjoyable for both clients and counsellors. They described it as a pleasurable and novel alternative to more traditional career counselling methods (Morgan & Skovholt, 1977, p. 395). According to Skovholt et al., (1989, p. 291) another benefit is that counsellors enjoy using imagery in their work and often prefer it over more objective and rational data. Perhaps these findings of Morgan and Skovholt (1977, p 395) and Skovholt et al., (1989, p. 291) can be generalized to other creative methods than guided imagery.

This is another example of how engaged counselling students were in using creative techniques:

*"I discovered that I had more to talk about from the drawing than I first thought.
It helped to point at the drawing along the way in the conversation. I think
communicating is difficult with just using words. I discovered that I even made
sound effects and used body language in the exercise. I think this helped me to
explore and express emotions more properly."*

This quote describes how effective this exercise was in helping the participant to communicate. The participant even got so eager that they used body language and sound effects to express themselves.

4.3.2 Positive experiences

Positive emotions are about participants' positive experience by using creative methods. Many participants wrote about their most positive experiences, how they enjoyed trying different methods, and many of them were pleasantly surprised by how effective the exercises turned out to be.

One student expressed the following:

> *"Although I have not initially been critical of creative approaches, I am amazed at how engaging I found it to be."*

This is repeated in several of the reflection logs. This is related to what Morgan and Skovholt, (1977, p. 395) found that many counsellors express that using a creative approach is engaging and fun. This is a valuable finding because it suggests that counsellors enjoy their work. As mentioned in the theory chapter, according to Schure et al., (2008, pp. 47-53) mental health professionals are particularly at risk for emotional exhaustion, in addition to common sources of organizational stress. Compassion fatigue and vicarious traumatization are terms that are increasingly being used (Shure et al., 2008, pp. 47-53). Stress may have harmful effects on the effectiveness and success of the work of counsellors, by reducing their capacity for attention, concentration, and decision-making skills (Schure et al., 2008, pp. 47-53). When counsellors experience their work as fun and engaging, this can counteract emotional exhaustion.

It is also a useful finding that the clients (here, the students in the role of clients) have positive experience about the counselling session. As Buser et al., (2011, p. 257) found, clients become more engaged in the counselling process, given the natural enjoyment they take in creative activities.

Several participants wrote about experiencing creative techniques which are fun and valuable, as illustrated by one participant here:

> *"I look forward to using creative techniques as a counsellor, because me as a client experienced it as valuable!".*

Below, a participant wrote about being positively surprised by the effect of the exercises:

> *"I am surprised at the effect these exercises had on me. All the exercises we have done so far that involved drawing, have been effective for me. Visualizing and drawing what I am feeling and sensing has made me see my thoughts and feelings more abstractly to myself, outside of myself. This is interesting, because I had not expected this beforehand, and it shows to me how useful drawing could be as a tool in coaching."*

This quote shows that some clients can benefit greatly from exercises that involve drawing and visualisation. It seems like it helps to "zoom out" and see things more clearly or for a different perspective, referring to: "... made me see my thoughts and feelings more abstractly". Visualisation in this context, is the same as guided imagery/fantasy, where the counsellor guides the client through a planned scenario. This can be related to Skovholt et al., (1989, p. 290) according to which guided imagery can help bring awareness to unconscious material, that is already influencing clients' decisions.

Here, one participant describes the most positive experience during the course:

> *"The most positive thing was that I got more practical tools. The creative opens*
> *me up to being more creative and trusting my own skills and the vibe in the room.*
> *To use more intuition in dealing with clients, made it easier for me to be present in*
> *the moment because we did not to have strict frames, that I used to think I had to*
> *stick to. My experience was liberating, I felt like it was easier to be myself."*

This participant describes the deliberating experience of not having to follow a model when counselling, but rather trusting one's intuition and reading the room. It seems like the participant got to use him or herself in counselling, it seems like it was hard work, but also a good accomplishment. One of the learning outcomes in the course was that the students can analyse different needs and apply relevant creative methods. It seems the student achieved this goal/learning outcome.

4.3.3 Development and adaptability

Development is the process of growing and acquiring new knowledge. Adaptability is to make appropriate responses to changing situations. Some participants expressed that there is some degree of development happening from the start to the end of the course. To be adaptable and flexible must be important requirement as a counsellor. As it is one of the learning outcomes in the course: that students can analyse different needs and apply relevant creative methods. This requires some flexibility. By trying out different techniques, the counsellor in-training develops and favours the techniques that he or she likes, masters, and finds effective. It is important that the counsellor believes in what he or she preaches.

This is illustrated in this quote:

> *"It's just a matter of finding the approach that suits you, whether it's drawing,*
> *fantasy travel, using pictures, etc. Overall, I'm very surprised at how I've gotten*
> *through the subject, and that I'm left with so much positive as I had not thought in*
> *advance."*

Participants sometimes wrote about developing their style as counsellors. Participants are counsellors in training, and practising and learning something new, helps you shape your counselling style. Learning more techniques gives you more flexibility to analyse the situation and apply relevant techniques.

To follow this thought, I have already mentioned that the counsellor must focus on the client and adapt the counselling to the person, using techniques that are appropriate for the client and the case. It is not only about adapting to the client, but the counsellor also needs to find his or her personal style. A counsellor cannot memorise and apply every technique taught, nor is this the goal. The relationship between counsellor and client is the most important component for growth and development in the counselling process (Ivey et al., 2012). According to Rogers (1954), three components must be present in the relationship between counsellor and client to achieve impact and positive outcomes in counselling: Congruence, Empathy, and Unconditional Positive regard (Rogers, 1954). The counsellor must be accepting of the client, listen, mirror body language, and encourage the client (Ivey et al., 2012, p. 369). It is the counsellor's responsibility to adjust this relationship by building a foundation of trust and

confidentiality. He or she must be very present in the moment and sincerely engaged in the client and his or her situation. Empathy is a key concept here! Sometimes the client and the counsellor are just not perfectly compatible, but the counsellor must set aside any sympathies or antipathies he or she may have to the client, to have a healthy relationship for working together in the counselling. To achieve a trustworthy approach to new clients is an important skill for a good counsellor.

One participant expressed this regarding the empty-chair technique:

> *"I experience that this exercise requires personal courage and/or trust in the relationship, and that if these criterions are met, this exercise can have a redemptive effect for the client."*

It is interesting that the participant mentions personal courage and/or confidence in the relationship. This supports the idea that creative methods need something to work. Certainly, there must not be too much psychological noise or resistance, the relationship between counsellor and client must be trusting and the client must have some willingness to learn, motivation or belief that the technique will work.

To end the discussion chapter, I would like to show a quote with an important point:

> *"I think it is exciting that our work is so varied as a counsellor. This give you the opportunity to explore what techniques are suitable for you. And also to build up a "toolbox" for later use. For me, the variation serves as a reminder that everyone has different needs in counselling."*

4.4 Limitations, considerations, and future research

Some considerations about this thesis must be addressed. First, the role of the researcher. Since I know the participants personally, there is a possibility of bias. The participants might describe me as a creative person. When I presented my master's project, I tried not to say too much about my own thoughts on the subject. I said that I remembered that we have different associations and thoughts about concepts, such as fantasy and creativity, that some are open-minded and curious, while others are more hesitant and sceptical. The teachers presented reflection logs as part of the learning in the course. The teachers in the master's program are good facilitators and welcome diverse opinions. I hope this helps in making students feel free to write and reflect openly.

Something to consider is that I can be biased because I have had positive experiences in using creative methods and by reading research on creative methods. I try to keep this in mind, especially when performing the analysis. During the research process, I was driven by curiosity, an open mind and I did not try to confirm my own experiences.

Another point to consider is the sample size and the nature of the data. The sample size is relatively small, and the size of content in the logs varies. Some participants wrote long logs, other participants wrote shorter logs. Some turned in logs after each lesson, other participants submitted only a few logs. This makes it harder to see personal/individual development. I am not seeking to generalise my findings to the entire

population, as mentioned in the method chapter, but I am trying to find out how students in the counselling program experience a creative course like RAD3033.

Another thing to take into consideration is the language. The reflection logs were written in Norwegian, and the quotes used in the results and discussion chapter, were translated to English. The translation may change the meaning of the text somewhat. Some words differ in Norwegian and English, for example, the Norwegian word "mestring". This is something to take into consideration. This was a challenge I had not expected.

Another concern is related to the reflection log method, because it is important that the participants interpret their own experiences. For some participants the interpretation process can be difficult, and thus lead to reflection logs of poor quality. For instance, a few participants described the exercises in detail, rather than describing their experience. Some students were simply not motivated to write reflection logs about their experiences. My impression is that many students were motivated and dutiful when it came to writing and submitting. My own experience is that writing reflection logs is helpful in gaining insights and reflecting on other people's experiences.

Further research could shed more light on the challenges of using different creative techniques, to develop creative techniques to become more accepted as a trusted method, and further become common knowledge in the field of counselling. Hopefully, more people will then be able to experience the positive impact of creative methods.

5 Conclusion

The aim of this master thesis has been to explore counselling students experience of creative approaches in counselling. In this section, I will summarise my findings regarding the research question *"How do counselling students experience the use of creative methods in counselling?".*

By collecting reflection logs, I gained insight into counselling students' expectations and experiences of learning about creative approaches during the semester.
To summarise the main findings: Counselling students experienced: 1. discovering many possibilities in using creative approaches, 2. challenges in using creative approaches, and 3. mastery of creative approaches.

The findings indicated that the counselling students found many possibilities through the use of a creative approach with many different techniques. Creative techniques were more specific than the participants had expected and were helpful in gaining a new perspective. The results suggest that creative techniques can – or has the potential to – counteract psychological nudity. Overall, the students expressed an openness to learning about creative approaches.

The findings suggest that resistance, negative experiences and psychological noise are challenges in using creative approaches. For some students, this process was a challenging and sometimes frustrating. Yet almost all students indicated that the process ended in an overall positive outcome. In addition, students experienced a sense of achievement, positive experiences, and development and adaptability in using creative approaches.

What makes a course in creativity, like the course RAD3033, so special, is that the classes are interactive. Students do not sit passively in an auditorium and listening to the teacher. In this course, they are obligated to actively participate in class discussions and hands-on learning; in this case the triad exercises. Students need to involve themselves. They are not limited to follow a recipe of predetermined questions that they must ask the client in a certain order, such as in a survey. They must use their communication skills, which is important in any type of counselling. Additionally, they must analyse the client's needs and apply appropriate creative techniques independently. In addition to valuable practise, these exercises give students the opportunity to help each other with their personal problems or challenges. After this course, students may feel that they have contributed to the growth and development of their fellow students. In order to overcome a more or less natural resistance to the level of engagement required, it is important that the students are well informed and prepared for the nature of a course similar to this.

Hopefully, this study may encourage educators, counsellors, and counsellors in-training to consider exploring creative approaches in counselling, and finally make courses of creative approaches a natural part of master's programs in counselling.

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Appendix

Appendix 1 - Information letter and declaration of consent
Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

«Rådgivningsstudenters opplevelse av kreative metoder i rådgivning»?

Jeg vil med dette spørre om du som rådgivningsstudent vil delta i et forskningsprosjekt i forbindelse med faget RAD3033. I dette skrivet gir jeg deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål og forskningsspørsmål

Formålet med dette forskningsprosjektet er kunnskap om rådgivningsstudenters erfaringer ved å lære om kreative metoder i rådgivning.

Jeg ønsker å finne ut mer om emnet oppleves relevant og hensiktsmessig, og forskningsspørsmål er: *Hvordan er rådgivningsstudenters opplevelse av å lære om kreative metoder i rådgivning? Hva er ifølge dem, utfordringene og mulighetene ved å bruke kreative metoder i rådgivning?*

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Institutt for pedagogikk og livslanglæring ved NTNU, Trondheim er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Veileder for studien er førsteamanuensis Kristian Firing.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Du er forespurt om å være med i denne studien fordi du gjennomfører emnet RAD3033 ved NTNU.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Når det gjelder metode vil refleksjonslogger bli brukt som datamateriale. Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer det at jeg som masterstudent får bruke dine logger som datagrunnlag, alt i anonymisert utgave. I tillegg kan det bli brukt intervju.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke ditt samtykke tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle opplysninger om deg vil da bli anonymisert. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg. Dvs. det vil ikke påvirke vurderingen av faget RAD3033.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Jeg vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til de formålene fortalt om i dette skrivet. Jeg behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket. Det er kun forskningsgruppen som vil ha tilgang til datamaterialet. Navn og kontaktopplysningene dine vil holdes anonymt ved at du skriver et «brukernavn» du finner på selv og dagens dato på refleksjonsloggen. Datamaterialet lagres på forskningsserver, innelåst/kryptert. Deltakerne vil ikke kunne gjenkjennes i senere publikasjoner.

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet?

Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes 20.06.2022. Alle refleksjonslogger vil slettes ved prosjektslutt.

Dine rettigheter

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få slettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få utlevert en kopi av dine personopplysninger (dataportabilitet), og
- å sende klage til personvernombudet eller Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra IPL Institutt for pedagogikk og livslang læring, NTNU har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

IPL Institutt for pedagogikk og livslang læring, ved masterstudent Tilde Ingebrigtsen på ▮▮▮▮▮ eller telefon: ▮▮▮▮▮

Eller veileder førsteamanuensis Kristian Firing, på epost ▮▮▮▮▮ eller telefon: ▮▮▮

NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS, på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Med vennlig hilsen

Tilde Ingebrigtsen

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om prosjektet *Rådgivningsstudenters opplevelse av bruk av kreative metoder i rådgivning*, og har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål. Jeg samtykker til:

- ☐ å delta gjennom mine anonymiserte logger
- ☐ å delta i et eventuelt intervju

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet, ca. 20.6.2022

Navn prosjektdeltaker

Dato

Appendix 2 – Project approval from NSD

Vurdering

Referansenummer
966346

Prosjekttittel
forskningsprosjektet «Rådgivningsstudenters opplevelse av kreative metoder i rådgivning»?

Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon
Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet / Fakultet for samfunns- og utdanningsvitenskap (SU) / Institutt for pedagogikk og livslang læring

Prosjektansvarlig (vitenskapelig ansatt/veileder eller stipendiat)
Kristian Firing

Type prosjekt
Studentprosjekt, masterstudium

Kontaktinformasjon, student
Tilde Ingebrigtsen

Prosjektperiode
01.01.2022 - 24.06.2022

Vurdering (1)

07.02.2022 - Vurdert
Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen av personopplysninger i prosjektet vil være i samsvar med personvernlovgivningen så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet med vedlegg, og eventuelt i meldingsdialogen mellom innmelder og Personverntjenester. Behandlingen kan starte. TYPE OPPLYSNINGER OG VARIGHET Prosjektet vil behandle alminnelige kategorier av personopplysninger frem til den datoen som er oppgitt i meldeskjemaet. LOVLIG GRUNNLAG Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake. Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være den registrertes samtykke,

jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a. PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER Personverntjenester vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen om: · lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen · formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke behandles til nye, uforenlige formål · dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet · lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet

DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER

Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18), og dataportabilitet (art. 20).

Personverntjenester vurderer at informasjonen om behandlingen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER

Personverntjenester legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

Ved bruk av databehandler (spørreskjemaleverandør, skylagring eller videosamtale) må behandlingen oppfylle kravene til bruk av databehandler, jf. art 28 og 29. Bruk leverandører som din institusjon har avtale med.

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og/eller rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER

Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til oss ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Før du melder inn en endring, oppfordrer vi deg til å lese om hvilke type endringer det er nødvendig å melde: https://www.nsd.no/personverntjenester/fylle-ut-meldeskjema-for-personopplysninger/melde-endringer-i-meldeskjema. Du må vente på svar fra oss før endringen gjennomføres.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET

Personverntjenester vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Kontaktperson ved Personverntjenester: Silje Fjelberg Opsvik

Lykke til med prosjektet!

Tables

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the theme work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report if the analysis.

Table 1, Phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87).

Table 2

Counselling students experienced:		
1. Discovering many possibilities in using creative approaches	**2. Challenges in using creative approaches**	**3. Mastery in using creative approaches**
- Potential for creative techniques - Creative techniques as specific tools - Change of perspective - Counteracting psychological nudity - Openness to learning	- Resistance - Negative experiences -Psychological noise	- Sense of achievement - Positive experiences - Development and adaptability

Table 2: Presentation of an overall of the findings.