Art Therapy Student Placement: Challenge and Opportunity?

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Challenge and Opportunity?

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“Tosnáíonn an Turas is Luachmhaire le Coiscéim Amháin”.

(The most valuable journey begins with a single footstep.)
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Abstract

The purpose of this research project is to explore the sector of Student Placement as it forms a significant part of the training programme on the MA in Art Therapy in Cork. The study aims to assess the effectiveness of this part of the educational process for trainees and investigate the impact the Clinical Placement experience has on Student Art Therapists.

By reflecting on the advancement of Art Therapy in our neighbouring isle and exploring the growth of Art Therapy as a profession in the Republic of Ireland, this study aims to chronicle a more recent Irish history of Art Therapy while acknowledging the inextricable links it has with the past. The researcher intends to clarify the multiple roles a student Art Therapist is required to fulfill during training, and proposes an examination of the trainees’ input as they embark upon their Clinical Placement experience.

This paper was inspired by the challenges the researcher initially encountered upon entering a second year of Clinical Placement in a new environment. There were struggles with certain aspects of this new beginning and the researcher was curious to investigate if any common thread ran through fellow students experiences. As Art Therapy training involves much introspection and self-questioning on behalf of the student, the researcher felt it would be important to listen to the voices of the ‘soon-to-be’ first graduates of the new MA in Art Therapy as a representative sample group. Thus, a questionnaire method was adopted as the focal point of this study with the proposed inquiry endeavouring to ascertain a fresh insight into the new challenges and opportunities that continue to face this evolving profession.
CHAPTER 1
1.0 Introduction

The expansion of a fresh idea comes about "...where and when persons become interested in the new idea, not only as intellectual content but also as a potential means of establishing a new intellectual identity and a new occupational role".

(Ben-David and Collins, 1966: 452).

This sociological suggestion can be applied to the growth of Art Therapy in Ireland; where passion, desire and interest have been strong enough to bring an idea beyond a thought and towards creation. This evolution of Art Therapy as a profession in Ireland is currently bearing the fruits of all those who pioneered over the last twenty years for its existence in the Republic. With a decade of Post-graduate training under its belt and a new MA course in its infancy, Cork has carved a notch on the historical post of the developing profession of Art Therapy.

Before examining Ireland's present situation regarding Art Therapy Student Placement, it is important to reflect on the general history of the establishment of Art Therapy Training in order to get a foothold on it's past. This review begins by initially outlining the literature around the growth of the profession in Britain with which Irish Art Therapy is inextricably linked. With this historical backdrop illustrating the scenic route of this occupation, the study continues with an exploration of the literature around the role of Clinical Placement within Art Therapy Training in the UK. This leads to a review of the development of Art
Therapy in Ireland and an exploration of the progress that has been made on the shoulders of those who pioneered for the profession in an Irish context. The study proceeds to chart the advancement of Art Therapy Training in Cork and more specifically, it reviews the intricate role Student Placement plays on the new MA in Art Therapy.

The process of Student Placement is a complex one and it continues to be affected and influenced by the multiple areas of training including: theory paper presentations; co-facilitation; training group; supervision; workshops; studio practice; academic deadlines; personal therapy; personal journaling; clinical note-writing etc. The influence of these many aspects of Art Therapy training have been incorporated into the questionnaire adopted for the methodological aspect of this study. The most relevant themes will be drawn upon and explored in the ‘Data Presentation & Discussion’ section of this paper.
2.0 Literature Review

Having extensively researched the area of Art Therapy Training on a range of electronic databases, the researcher was surprised to discover a paucity of literature in the general arena of Student Placement. While the published literature on the specific area of Art Therapy Student Placement is scant, there have been a number of articles, papers and chapters in books published around the more general area of Art Therapy Student Training including: supervision, the role of art-making for the therapist and the profession’s historical development. This review aims to examine the relevance of the literature available in relation to Art Therapy Clinical Placement including documented works on the development of Art Therapy as a profession charted from the 1970s onwards. The exploration of the history of Art Therapy has highlighted the many challenges and opportunities that have led it to its present position.

2.1 Our Neighbours Developments in the Field of Art Therapy

According to Waller (1991), Naumburg was considered to be a pivotal founder of the Art Therapy movement in the USA and practically responsible for the surfacing of Art Therapy as a profession (Ulman 1983: 122-3). Waller (1991) underscores how Naumburg’s contemporaries also had much to contribute to the development of this esoteric profession. These protagonists included individuals such as
Kramer; Hill; Petrie; Champernowne; Adamson; Lydiatt and Pickford, who were central to the initiation and evolution of Art Therapy.

While Hill (1938) is credited for asserting 'Art Therapy' in Britain, it has been argued that each of its contributors interpreted the concept in their own way and furnished the development of the profession in a well rounded manner (Waller 1991). Waller & Dalley (1994) have noted that the therapeutic aspect of art-making was held in high esteem by all therapists. For Naumburg, Champernowne and Lydiatt the transference relationship is central to the dynamic resolution of conflict. Alternatively, Kramer, Petrie, Hill and Adamson viewed the artist in the Art Therapist as playing a vital role in the process; the focus of their approach is the significance of the artwork as a 'container' for emotions. Waller & Dalley (1994) and Waller (1991) note how Art Therapy has, in the past, meant different things to many individuals. It can be argued that this tenet still holds strong today within the development of the profession.

Modern day Art Therapy is generally influenced by the vision of Naumburg and Champernowne while Hill's input has branched off into the "Hospital Arts Movement" (Waller 1991: 15). Arguably, the direction Art Therapy has taken in the UK has been highly influenced by Waller herself. While this key figure has advocated the importance of the transference relationship in the practice of Art
Therapy, she has possibly neglected some fundamental aspects of Hill’s approach. The researcher believes that the many views, approaches and perspectives that the therapy’s forerunners adopted, have given value and meaning to the profession in the broadest sense and have greatly contributed to the present practice of Art Therapy in a holistic way. That is to say, the pioneers of Art Therapy have equipped present students and current practitioners with the knowledge and courage to be flexible in their theoretical approach while being entirely cognizant of the essential role of the image within the session. Holding onto the image in Art Therapy distinguishes it from several other professions which can often depend on verbal engagements.

Waller, the author of ‘Becoming a Profession’ (1991) has also acknowledged the time-consuming challenges and rigorous undertakings that faced the initiators of training in the formation of this new discipline in the 1940s. She delves deeply into the challenges inherent in establishing Art Therapy training in Goldsmiths’ College in the 1970s. First, she highlights the ‘over-ambitious’ timetable with which students were expected to comply (p.231). More specifically, the author felt that two days in college and two days on Clinical Placement left little time to absorb the theory, to create personal artwork and fulfill other educational demands. This is particularly interesting as the duration of training at the time was one year only. Second, Waller highlights issues over the apparent imbalance in course content
with which students struggled (an overly complex clinical input and not enough emphasis on the practical element of the course).

Early Art Therapy training in the UK was traditionally completed within one year—the brevity of which has been criticized by Birtchnell (1977, 1981). Teasdale (2004) explains that from 1994, all full-time training would be spanned over two years and part-time training would be spread over a longer period in order to accommodate students in their pedagogical and practical learning. While it is the researchers inclination to consider a one year course unthinkable due to the current course content, it is worth questioning if the extended length of time has brought with it another set of concerns and additional complex aspects for the student to assimilate? Arguably, the dynamic timetable and demanding course content continue to remain a struggle for the trainee Art Therapist today.

It is also worth bearing in mind the variety of approaches that our European constituents have taken to Art Therapy training. In her more recent publication, Waller (1998) brings to bear the different criteria that exist regarding course content, duration and definitive qualification on completion of training. She highlights the need for a “core standard of practice” which would include the subjects to be studied (p.127). She also called for a “code of ethics” to be agreed upon as a benchmark for practice (p.127). Though Waller’s (1991) desire for the
unification of a core practice for Europe can be appreciated, it seems somewhat idealistic. The researcher envisages many challenges involved in the drawing up of such a convention. There are cultural, historical, religious, ethical, political and territorial issues involved in the development of any course and the complexity of the training process of Art Therapy adds to this challenge. It is important to remember that while a country may not ‘reach the mark’ in Waller’s book of standards, it brings with it a unique and varied approach to training which may have an indigenous value and also a sense of worth, within a given context. While Waller (1991) considers the institution’s responsibility to trainees in the process, the implications of benchmarking and unifying a European Art Therapy may need more reflection and detailed attention.

Waller (1991) proceeds to comment on the dearth of literature around the area of training in Britain with the exception of some articles written by Evans & Waller (1979) and Byrne (1980). These authors dedicated the articles to training at Goldsmiths’ College, London; Hertfordshire College of Art and Birmingham Poytechnic, respectively. The reports examined training and research in the latter colleges and also ‘gave voice’ to students who offered their opinions on the courses. Attention is drawn to the ‘voice of the student’ here as it has quite some significance in relation to the methodological aspect of this study which will be discussed later.
From the researcher’s perspective, there is little to criticize about Waller’s (1991) work. Although her research has delved into forty two years of practice in the UK, the author refrains from detailing the experience of Art Therapy Student Placement. Admirably, Waller (1991) has listened to students and is sensitive to all that encapsulates and dictates training for the fledgling Art Therapist. While Waller’s account is detailed and informative to the development of Art Therapy in Ireland, the acronyms for the variety of structural systems and professional bodies that exist in the UK are indigenous to the country itself and difficult to comprehend for an outsider. It is also important to maintain the awareness that while Waller (1991) has embraced a worthwhile direction of practice involving the ‘therapeutic transaction’ between client and therapist, Hill’s route of ‘therapeutic occupation’ should not be neglected either (p.14). One only has to consider the broad spectrum of clients involved in the wide range of settings in which Art Therapy occurs. All features and aspects of these schools of thought are helpful for students as they undertake their Clinical Practice in the Art Therapy training experience.

2.2 Moving Along

Byrne (2000) elaborates on how the 1970s gave more professional credence to Art Therapy as postgraduate training developed. With the establishment of the British Association of Art Therapists (BAAT) in 1963, Art Therapy in the UK was beginning to achieve its goals and the profession was becoming more openly accepted as a discipline in its own right (Waller 1991). Byrne, Gilroy, Brown &
Wood (2000) more recently outlined the contents and requirements of Art Therapy training that is on offer in the UK. However, while Clinical Practice is mentioned by the authors there is no detailed exploration into the explicit area of Student Placement.

Woddis (2004) takes over from Waller (1991) and charts the professional evolution of Art Therapy in Britain between 1982 and 1992. She brings us through the socio-economic and political factors which have helped and hindered the growth of Art Therapy in the UK. While Woddis notes the crucial elements of Art Therapy Training, her contribution is brief and she does not delve into the meticulous area of Student Placement. Nevertheless, she highlights the notion that training dictates being involved in a sequence of ‘interlocking relationships’ (p.61); this can affect the student in many ways during Clinical Practice. The struggle and juggle between the multi-relational situation of the ‘student and artwork’; ‘student and training group’; ‘student and tutor’; ‘student and supervisor’; ‘student and clinical placement’; ‘student and personal therapy’ and of course the inter-relationship between ‘student and client’ can be a challenging experience for the trainee. These elements of training can affect how a student is in themselves as they commence Clinical Placement.
Karter (2000) and Corey (1996) pinpoint the variety of pressures and issues with which beginning therapists are faced and also acknowledge the need for a sense of humour in the process. The former publication is a relief for any student to read and a great accompaniment for trainees who are struggling to understand the process. While it supports the therapist it also cautions the reality inherent in not taking responsibility for one's own actions during the different stages of training. Corey (1996) provides several guidelines for trainees with some extremely helpful and practical advice on how to deal with personal issues around anxiety; disclosure; authenticity; perfectionism; challenging clients; silence; self-deception etc. Self-trust is promoted and the development of a unique style of practice is advocated. With prudence, he highlights the causes of ‘burnout’ and also makes suggestions on how to prevent this as a beginning therapist.

Karter (2002) also explores the area of supervision and highlights the importance of not viewing supervisors through rose-tinted lenses and cautions students against falling victim to “super-vision syndrome” (p. 94). Edwards (1994, 2004) continues to investigate supervision in depth and highlights the dearth of literature available in relation to the supervision of Art Therapists in practice. However, Edwards (1994) brings to light the value of a reflective “dimension” within supervision (p. 23) and draws attention to the different approaches to supervision from a historical perspective: a traditional Hungarian approach which integrated analysis and supervision versus a Viennese approach which sought to draw a boundary between
analyst and supervisor. The latter remains as the general approach applied today, though the boundary between these two areas is not always clear. Edwards (2004) also explores the role supervision plays in Art Therapy training and considers the overwhelming feelings that students can experience in training.

Colin Teasdale (2000) provides a succinct description of the role Clinical Placement plays for students training to be an Art Therapist. In his paper on ‘The Role of Clinical Placement in Art Therapy Training’ Teasdale initially comments on the paucity of contributions published in the specific arena of Art Therapy Clinical Placement. Ironically, the author is not surprised at this fact. Rather, he considers this dearth of research as ‘interesting’ considering that Clinical Practice forms ‘between 30%- 40%’ of the programme of study for trainees (p.158).

Indeed, this shortage of research opens the door for more studies to be undertaken in the area of Student Placement and begs the question as to why so little literature exists in this area. Is it because it may criticize a system that has struggled so hard to come into being? Is it because the effectiveness of the area of Student Placement may be assessed? Is it because we are distracted by the different elements of student placement as opposed to looking at it as a whole? Or is it even possible to look at Student Placement without including other aspects of training? Is it because students are overwhelmed by the multi-faceted training? Is it due to the sheer
range and variety of placement settings and their diverse levels of appreciation of
different therapeutic approaches? Or is it simply because the best possible job is
being done by those facilitating the course? Rhetorically, can any of these
questions be answered?

According to Teasdale (2000) the Art Therapy profession in the UK has ‘been
released from its pioneering history’ or metaphorically, it has ‘grown up and flown
the nest’ (p.175). This resonates with what Waller (1991) said about Art Therapy
being in its adolescence in the 1980s (where Art Therapy was almost seen in terms
of having a sense of mortality). Waller (1991) soon deviated from this line of
thought however, as she felt the natural progression of this Art Therapy life would
lead to maturity and consequently to the imminent death of the profession; which
was not desirable. Woddis (2004) also stated that the 1980s brought a period of
change that would continue to affect the expansion of Art Therapy as a profession
in Britain. However, from the evolution of Art Therapy, despite social, economical,
political, structural and territorial challenges, the profession has clung onto the
opportunity to grow, spread its wings and take flight as an accepted independent
therapy.

Overall, this British development in the field of Art Therapy provides an optimistic
blueprint for a similar yet unique way for Ireland’s future Art Therapists. The
dawning of Art Therapy in Britain had its own tentative beginnings in the 1940s (Case & Dalley 2002) but over time it has faced and withstood the difficult challenges and its resilience has shone through. In Ireland, our present challenge is also our opportunity to bring Art Therapy into the future while recognizing it as a revolutionary and evolutionary concept. The researcher considers present Irish Art Therapy to be in the fledgling stage of its developmental story and looks forward to the young leaving the nest in the (hopefully) not too distant future.

In the next chapter, the recent history of Art Therapy in Ireland will be discussed and the development of the profession will be explored in detail.
CHAPTER 3
3.0 On Our Own Doorstep: Art Therapy in Ireland

The establishment of Art Therapy Training in the Republic of Ireland has undergone its own tumultuous odyssey over the last twenty years. Just as in the therapeutic space, this long-awaited process was one not to be rushed, despite the eagerness of those behind its promotion.

In exploring the historical incubation of Art Therapy within an Irish context, the researcher openly admits to feeling a huge sense of pride while reading Deirdre Horgan’s articles on ‘Art Therapy in Ireland’(1998) and ‘Bringing it all Back Home’(1992). Horgan brought to light the challenges and opportunities that accompanied (and still escort) the pursuit of a profession in Art Therapy; yet remained honest to the reality of the then current situation. In our recent Art Therapy past, Ireland has made great strides regarding the development the profession. A graduate of U.K. training in 1988, Horgan gave testimony to the tenuous beginnings of Art Therapy in Ireland twenty years ago. The sincerity of the author is admirable as she later promoted Art Therapy Training in Ireland all the while being aware of the flexibility needed and the sense of imagination required around working within the public sector.
Molloy (1984) has extended on this notion of ‘flexibility’ and argues that the Art Therapist needs to be constant in their interventions and preservation of boundaries. Woddis (2004) also cautions against compromising the therapeutic space and is apprehensive about the potential ‘erosion’ of the fundamentals which underpin the practice of Art Therapy (p.60). Andrea Gilroy (2006) further reminds us, (as she successfully struggles to promote evidence-based practice for Art Therapy) that we have a fight on our hands; we are constantly having to prove our worth in a political battle because our “primary audience- the policy makers and managers- are outside Art Therapy” (p.37). The people with whom we work; Managers, Head Nurses, Clinical Psychologists Psychiatrists, Principals etc. and their governing bodies the Health Service Executive (HSE), Department of Education etc. are still learning about Art Therapy. It is the researcher’s belief that *improvising* within the therapeutic setting is more desirable than *compromising* the fundamentals of Art Therapy.

### 3.1 Moving to Munster: Art Therapy in Cork

Ireland’s 1990s brought with them a growing interest in Art Therapy as a profession and an eagerness to have a training course in the Republic was preceded by taster courses to the public in the form of Art Therapy Summer Schools (1991), Foundation Courses (1993), Cork Community Art Link (1993), Arts and Empowerment courses (1995) and Art Therapy Night Classes (2001).
Whilst not ‘Art Therapy’ per se, Cork Community Art Link and the Arts and Empowerment courses (with much input, organization and facilitation from Ron Melling and Louise Foott) provided examples to the public of the therapeutic value art possessed. They also opened up many individuals’ minds and actual physical centres to the idea of ‘placements’ for prospective Art Therapy students. These courses all occurred in different locations in Cork including Crawford College of Art & Design, a city centre school, a day centre attached to Our Lady’s Hospital in Shanakiel etc. (It is worth noting that Belfast also housed similar courses).

Such creative opportunities were a welcome breath of fresh air for those interested in Art Therapy, though the environments in which these workshops were carried out were not always ideal. In a general conversation with Ron Melling (2007), he commented to the researcher that there was something to be said about the interest and dedication of students and their willingness to tolerate the less than satisfactory environments “for the magical quality of the Art Therapy experience”. He also recalls the challenges that faced those facilitating the courses. According to Melling, space was at a minimum and the suitability of attained rooms was not always ideal, with equipment, desks etc. having to be removed before Art Therapy workshops would commence and replaced again when the day had ended. The provision of space is a basic and indispensable requirement for Art Therapy. However, the issue around ‘space’ is something that continues to echo through the
practice of Art Therapy today and something the researcher believes will challenge many Art Therapists to infinity and beyond!

3.2 A Move Towards Independence: The MA Today

Just as Champenowne and Petrie recognized the importance of setting up independent and appropriate training (Waller 1991), so too did Ireland's pioneers of Art Therapy training. The desire to build on the Art Therapy introductory courses that were being run in Cork eventually resulted in the establishment of an eagerly awaited Post-graduate course in 1998 which was franchised by the University of Hertfordshire. The vision of Ron Melling, Janek Dubowski, Alice Byrnes, Alida Gersie and Peter Byrne aided in bringing this phenomenon into existence. Geoff-Steiner Scott (Principal of Crawford College of Art & Design) was also completely supportive of the initiative. With the co-operation of Judy Glasman and Phillipa Brown (University of Hertfordshire), it was ensured that the official requirements were being met in the drawing up of this new course.

Needless to say, there are the unavoidable political tensions, religious traditions and cultural issues that are inherent in transplanting a training course from a country which has had such a massive historical impact on Ireland. Horgan (1992), in describing a nationalistic moment she experienced during a group painting during her training in Britain, demonstrates how cultural background is important to us
regardless of location at any given time. She also acknowledges the past role of the
Church in Ireland. A place for the confession of sins traditionally, this provided the
initial ‘therapy’, through confession, for a congregation who showed great
resistance in latter years to any therapy. Consequently, the nation’s reluctance to
embrace Art Therapy as a non-judgmental phenomenon is slowly dissipating and
Irish people are becoming more open to the general notion of ‘therapy’.

The implementation of the three year Post-graduate course in 1998 led to a period
of great success for the profession of Art Therapy and the training of students on
Irish soil. This part-time course successfully led six cohorts of students through
Post-graduate training which is a huge milestone for Art Therapy in Ireland. The
wheels of motion were activated in 2002 and the intention to run the MA was filed.
A final intake of students in 2003 saw the end of a productive Post-graduate era and
the beginning of a new MA journey. Despite this journey being lengthy and
demanding, it involved the unrivalled commitment of a greater band of well
established Art Therapists including: Ed Kuczaj; Rupert Cracknell; Julie Aldridge;
Catherine Phillips and Terrie Young. This pioneering group was conscious of
adapting and revising an Art Therapy course in ways that would be suitable within
an Irish context in terms of culture, accreditation and acceptability.
Though the course was derived from the British model, the implementation of the Irish version aimed to firmly hold onto the role of the image and the image-making process in training. The MA in Cork wished to place emphasis on the practical element in training while having a sufficient academic component. Evidently a strong ‘Adrian Hill-approach’ with elements of Naumburg.

Although interviews were held in May of 2003 for full-time and part-time MA students, it was not until May of 2006 the new MA in Art Therapy in Cork was validated. In June of that same year the original franchise under the University of Hertfordshire ended and the MA Art Therapy in Cork gained independence. With HETAC delegating authority to CIT to make their own awards, the MA in Art Therapy was the first course to achieve recognition by the regional institute in 2006. The Institute of Technology allowed Irish Art Therapy to gain autonomy from our helpful neighbours in Hertfordshire and also gained themselves by becoming an institution which could endorse its own courses.

3.3 Current Course Stance

A locational move from the day centre at Shanakiel to units in Melbourne Business Park on the Model Farm Road in 2006 provided a different setting with a debatable question of suitability for an Art Therapy course to be run. This again highlights
the interesting concept of the types of spaces to which Art and Art Therapy have been subjected in the past and continue to endure in the 21st century.

With an MA Upgrade available for Art Therapists wishing to add to their previous qualification running concurrently with the full-time and part time MA courses, the Art Therapy Department is a fast growing sector. The same facility also plays host to the Foundation and Arts and Empowerment courses and the limited space for storage is a consideration here. However, the building has recently been acquired and patience is required as the process continues to evolve amidst a committed team, with a strong and meaningful philosophy.

The MA in Art Therapy in Cork currently comprises of a “theoretical, experiential and clinical construct of learning” (Course & Course Curriculum Handbook 2006: 1). Along with a range of experiential workshops, a number of visiting Art Therapists and Psychology experts all contribute to student training. As well as the practicum experience which involves fulfilling a total of 120 days on Clinical Placement, weight is also given to placement supervisors reports, visiting tutors reports and essays based on the clinical experience of the student.
3.4 Overall Summary

In summary, the Literature Review undertaken has helped to form a picture of the continuous evolution of Art Therapy with reference to Art Therapy Student Placement within the training process. This exploration has provided a historical synopsis of the challenges and opportunities inherent to the journey of Art Therapy. It has chronologically assessed where Art Therapy in the Republic of Ireland comes in terms of its developments in the field and it has also provided a recent update of the status of Art Therapy Clinical Placement as it forms part of the current MA in Cork.

This Literature Review has also contributed to the researcher making a fresh inquiry into the very real experiences of student Art Therapists regarding their Clinical Practice through the medium of questionnaires. The survey looks at the challenges and opportunities that can be posed at the initiation of the placement experience and incorporates a number of questions around the inter-related areas of training including College and Placement Supervision, Art-Making and Personal Therapy. Although these elements of training greatly contribute to the role of Clinical Placement, the interlink between these aspects cannot be explored in depth in the Literature Review within the given constraints of the researcher’s aims. Therefore, links with the relevant literature will be interwoven through the Discussion section of this paper and supplementary writings have been added to the Appendices section of this paper.
CHAPTER 4
4.0 Methodology Overview

The method of enquiry adopted for this study involved the employment of questionnaires with a view to exploring the plethora of challenges and opportunities that student Art Therapists experience as they embark upon their Clinical Placement journey. Students were encouraged to reflect on their practice and highlight the benefits of Clinical Placement while acknowledging the possible pitfalls and prejudices that can surreptitiously invade a student’s practicum experience. The questionnaire elicits information around a very real experience and also reflects the responsibility back upon the students who are requested to present suggestions, acknowledge different approaches, provide possible solutions and initiate changes or improvements that could add to rather than detract from their experience of the new MA Art Therapy in Cork.

The aim of the survey research is not to condemn institutions, tutors or courses but to be open and honest about the current situation around Art Therapy Student Placement. Its goal is not to score highly on the ‘poor me’ scale; rather the researcher aims to represent the voice of the student amidst the data analysis. In the Discussion section of the study, students’ responses will be explored in more depth and relevant theoretical concepts and issues which underpin the complex processes involved in this unique experience will be highlighted. The researcher has also explored the aspect of Clinical Placement in the other arts therapies with a view to
gaining a clearer understanding of the multi-faceted training process. However, due to this being a small-scale research project, the details have been included in the Appendices section of this paper.

At the risk of being labelled “naïve” by Braun and Clarke (2006: 80), the researcher believes that by employing a questionnaire method, students would be enabled to voice their true opinions, feelings, expectations, realities, hopes and fears around their placement experience and other related issues. In promoting evidence-based practice (EBP), Gilroy (2006) states that there is a need to “develop a multi-voiced evidence base, one that includes an outcomes dialect” (p.37). In the same way, just as the client’s voice needs to be heard in the evolving process of EBP, those learning to be the listeners also deserved to be listened to.

4.1 Advantages and Disadvantages

Hutton (1990) denotes a number of advantages and disadvantages of using surveys. A striking element which was relevant in choosing this type of methodology was the need for questions to be unbiased. The researcher acknowledges that there was a paradoxical challenge in remaining objective in constructing a set of questions while being simultaneously and subjectively involved in the training process.
Needless to say, numerous drafts of the questionnaire were composed and piloted, and many attempts were made to establish a thematic, sequential and ordered approach to the survey. The formulation of the questions provided a time consuming challenge as did the struggle to be as objective as possible in developing a method of research which would hopefully bear fruit. In adopting this method of investigation, the researcher was cognizant of the need for expediency in the enquiry and conscious also of the time factor involved in correlating questions, distributing, collecting, reading and analyzing the questionnaires with a view to presenting and discussing the collated data. This highlighted the need for clarity of thought which was difficult at such an early stage in the process of establishing a ‘hypothesis’ for what seemed like an extremely vast and evolving thesis which would deviate on many tangents along the way.

Hutton (1990) spotlights the limitations of surveys as he claims that they lack some relativity to broader theoretical concerns. The researcher refutes this remark as it suggests a lack of depth in the validity of the responses made. It is also inconclusive if one considers the detail and profundity with which students have replied in the delegated questionnaires as part of this study. Arguably, it is valid to acknowledge small-scale research as it can be a catalyst for change, progression and further evolution within a given profession.
4.2 Qualitative or Quantitative?

Blaxter, Hughes & Tight (2002) acknowledge that collected data via questionnaires can be either of a qualitative or quantitative nature. However, they continue to say that questionnaires do tend to veer towards more “quantitative forms of analysis” due to their numerical or coded disposition (p.215). The researcher adopted a predominately qualitative design to the questionnaire which was expansive in nature. The questionnaire incorporated the open-ended question approach amidst a quantitative element which requested some numerically scaled responses. This approach was adopted in an attempt to triangulate the evidence allowing the subjects viewpoint to be heard through the data analysis. The inquiry was based on the theme of Student Placement encompassing questions around the fundamental elements of:

- location, acquisition and starting date of placement;
- level of student preparation/ prior experience with chosen group;
- the informative aspects detailing the nature of current client groups;
- whether or not there had previously been an Art Therapist on placement in the organization;
- provisions/ resources available; and
- personal input; regarding advantages and disadvantages, challenges and opportunities and the pros and cons related to institutional dynamics, college and placement supervision, art-making, personal therapy and other aspects of training and personal life which affect students on placement.
Blaxter, Hughes & Tight (2002) recognize the value in combining qualitative and quantitative research and believe that one can illuminate the other. While cognizant of Gilroy’s (2006) push for evidence-based practice in the field of Art Therapy and appreciative of her reasons behind its promotion, the researcher is attracted to Sherman & Webb (1988) as they note that qualitative research is “lived”, “felt” or “undergone” which is compliant with the process-led aspect of training to be an Art Therapist (p.64). Oakley (1999) highlights the distinctions between qualitative and quantitative paradigms, detailing the validity of the former subjective approach which is “process-oriented” and the reliability of the latter objective standpoint which aims to “seek the facts” within an evidence orientated society (p.65).

While the survey has encompassed a surfeit of questions, the most pertinent and relevant aspects have been targeted for this limited study. Admittedly, the researcher’s personal interest in gaining a broad overview of students’ placements gave rise to the surplus of questions posed. (A copy of the questionnaire can be found in the Appendices section of this paper).

4.3 Pilot Questionnaire

Previous to its official distribution, the questionnaire was piloted by one full-time and one part-time Art Therapy student in their second year of the MA in Cork. This
gave the researcher an insight into which questions might elicit similar answers, the amount of time it would take to complete the questionnaire and how effective, ambiguous or suitable the questions may or may not have been. Adjustments were made to the questionnaire accordingly. Art Therapy Student Placement proved to be a topical issue as these initial ‘pilotees’ responded from the heart. Admittedly, the researcher was touched by the thought and effort that went into the responses considering the longer than average amount of time the survey required to be completed (approximately 45 mins),

4.4 The Participants

The participants in this study were second year full-time and part-time students on the MA Art Therapy course in Cork who were in the throes of beginning their second year’s Clinical Placement.

In an initial attempt to broaden the study to the North of Ireland, the researcher made contact with the Centre for Psychotherapy at the Belfast Health & Social Care Trust in 2007 with a view to exploring the possibility of gaining the perspective of second year students on a similar, but different course. On enquiry, it was explained that the MSc in Art Therapy (previously run in Queen’s University, Belfast) had gone through some evolutionary changes. This new progress was made with the intention of commencing a new MSc in Art Psychotherapy in
February 2008. Due to these administrative and practical course changes, there has been no student intake since 2004. Consequently, the last cohort of students completed training in 2007 thus leaving a vacuum of second year trainees as this study was being undertaken. Therefore a comparative study of the course in the two jurisdictions could not be furnished, but a wealthy contribution from students in the Republic is highly significant and richly ample.

Hutton (1990) affirms that survey research involves the gathering of information by posing a set of previously formulated questions in a sequenced structure to a sample group which would aim to represent a specific population. The researcher acknowledges that this survey has been limited to a population of second year students on the MA Art Therapy in Cork. However, the combination of skills, knowledge and prior work and life experience that these individuals bring with them, together with the disparate clinical placements which have been undertaken in various geographical locations, does actually capture a representative population. The researcher would argue that this diversity is reflected in the survey’s final results and students’ responses on both a quantitative and qualitative level.

There were no third year part-time students as the research was being undertaken and the researcher declined to extend the survey to first years. It was felt that the level of placement experience would have been different at such an early stage of
training for first-year part-time students. At the time of commencing research in November 2007, there were, in total, twenty-one student Art Therapists in second year: twelve on the full-time course (including the researcher herself) and nine on the part-time course (there were initially twelve on this course too). Twenty trainees were approached by the researcher and invited to complete a questionnaire based on Art Therapy Student Placement and related issues including art-making, personal therapy and other challenges and opportunities that students may have encountered on their journey so far.

4.5 Ethical Considerations

Confidentiality was assured to those involved in completing the questionnaire and the utmost of respect and care guaranteed to protect the anonymity of the responses. Authenticity and honesty in responses was requested of the students and the making of images in response to some questions was encouraged. Hutton (1990) questions the issue of the “truthfulness” of responses in surveys (p.79). While this gives cause for reasonable concern, the researcher believes that this topic lies so close to the bone that the ‘rawness’ of the answers was felt in the reading of the responses made by students. Students were encouraged to return the questionnaires at their earliest convenience or within the space of two weeks. All students were willing to participate in the study and the 100% response rate was welcomed.
CHAPTER 5
5.0 Data Collection and Analysis

After the questionnaires were collected, the researcher read the students responses with great interest and reviewed the content several times to assimilate and analyse the information provided. The researcher was overwhelmed at the amount of thought put into the surveys and was privileged to be entrusted with this wealth of useful new information.

In the following pages, the findings of the research study will be presented. The researcher has adopted a predominately thematic approach to analyse the content of the qualitative data. Qualitative paraphrased comments and students succinct quotes are also interwoven throughout the data presentation which aims to bring a realistic subjectivity to this representation of the dynamic process of Student Placement. Where possible, the researcher has charted key phrases in students' responses to open-ended questions and categorized them into broader themes. A series of bar graphs and pie charts have been devised to quantitatively and visually depict the students various responses to particular questions. Numerical values were assigned to some qualitatively oriented questions on a graded scale and the extended responses to these questions will be clearly represented. The Appendices section of this study contains an expansive account of the key themes and extended responses. The analysed data will be presented and discussed simultaneously in the following section as the researcher felt that something would be lost in the segregation of these very much linked sections.
5.1 Data Presentation & Discussion

In this section of the study, the researcher will explore the most pertinent aspects of the questionnaire in relation to the aims of the research. This includes the presentation of data around:

- Students who sourced their own placement and their perception of this;
- The role of the college in the organization of placements;
- Students who ran workshops for placement staff and their reasons for doing or not doing so;
- Placement supervision and students’ level of satisfaction with this;
- The varied professions of placement supervisors;
- College supervision and students’ level of satisfaction with this;
- Some suggestions from students on how to improve college supervision;
- Personal therapy; and
- Art-making.

Before launching into the graphic details of students’ responses regarding Clinical Placement, it is interesting to acknowledge the broad spectrum of clinical settings that students have undertaken in their second year’s practicum experience. These include: Working with individuals who have suffered Brain Injuries; Children at Risk; Asylum Seekers/ Refugees; the area of Learning Disability; Schools (primary/ secondary/ special); Autism, Psychiatry (adults/ adolescents); Addiction; Hospices; Drug Rehabilitation Centres; Youthreach Centres; Voluntary Organizations and Family Life Centres.
While the survey discerned that the majority of students had some anxieties and concerns about working with their new client group, a small number of trainees expressed no major issues around starting their fresh experience. Concerns for the greater part hovered around the themes of communication with non-verbal clients; possible challenging behaviour of clients; students feeling of unpreparedness and fear of not being ‘good enough’; worries around suitability of therapeutic space; students’ lack of experience and difficulty in trusting the process of Art Therapy. Those who formed part of the minority expressed confidence due to their prior experience and one student felt it was a great privilege to be given the opportunity of sharing the clients’ unique world.

In an attempt to ascertain if the chosen centres and organizations were the preferences of the students, the researcher asked trainees if they sourced their own placements this year.
5.2 The Sourcing of Student Placement

Figure 1: Number of Students who Sourced Their Own Placement.

Figure 1 represents the number of second year students who did and did not source their own placement in 2007. As presented, seventeen out of the twenty students surveyed said they sourced their own placement. This is an interesting figure and without debate shows the level of maturity and confidence of second year Art Therapy students who were willing and able to explore, locate and initiate a placement without college aid.
5.3 Perception of Placement Procuration

The second part of this question called upon students to consider their perception of seeking out a placement, i.e. whether they viewed the sourcing of their own placement as a difficulty or an opportunity. The results were as follows:

Fig. 2: Students' View on Sourcing Placement.

Interestingly, no students viewed the procedure as a difficulty alone. Twelve students viewed sourcing their own placement as an opportunity and eight trainees expressed their experience as being a mixture of both opportunity and difficulty.
Students were then asked to expand on why they viewed the sourcing of their own placement as an opportunity or a difficulty. Multiple responses were noted and similar themes emerged in the students replies. The responses are categorized under key themes with broader opportunities listed within each theme. The main themes that re-emerged for students were based upon Experience, Practice, Exploration and Choice and are listed in Table 1 overleaf.
### OPPORTUNITIES

#### Table (1): Key Themes of Opportunities.

| Experience | • of approaching institutions  
|            | • in establishing multi-disciplinary relationships  
|            | • possibility of continuing on as work is a positive  
|            | • opportunity to combine work experience with Art Therapy knowledge  
|            | • establishing contacts  
|            | • insight gained after last years experience  
|            | • empowering  
| Practice   | • of ‘selling’ self  
|            | • of ‘selling’ Art Therapy as we will be doing it next year on our own  
|            | • clarifying what Art Therapy is  
| Exploration| • of possibilities in the community  
|            | • of sourcing other Art Therapists in my area  
|            | • of self/ self-promotion/ self-confidence  
|            | • learn more about different areas  
| Choice     | • of the group I hope to work with  
|            | • of the place I wanted to be/ working in an area I desire  
|            | • travel convenience  

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In general, these positive responses echo a sense of freedom and a notion that this present experience will equip trainee Art Therapists with the necessary skills when they qualify.

The following responses (in Table 2) formed part of the students’ replies in relation to the difficult aspects of sourcing a placement without college aid. It is important to note that these ‘difficulties’ were expressed in conjunction with ‘opportunities’ and not highlighted solely as difficulties. The key themes that arose here were difficulties around Promotion, Lack of Understanding, Communication and Time:

**DIFFICULTIES**

**Table (2): Key Themes of Difficulties.**

| Promotion | • difficulty in explaining and ‘selling’ Art Therapy to various possible placement sources  
|           | • I had to promote myself which I found hard |

| Lack of understanding and communication | • placement have never had an Art Therapy student and lacked understanding of my placement/supervision needs  
|                                         | • it wasn’t made clear by staff that we should source our own placement  
|                                         | • difficult to find a placement in my home town |

| Time | • took three months to organise |
These responses reflect the difficulties that students encountered at the initial stages of Clinical Placement but a mixed response presents how students turned their difficulties into opportunities for the most part. Interestingly, what some students viewed as an opportunity, others viewed as a difficulty. One of the most striking positives from the researcher’s perspective is that the opportunities evidently outweigh the difficulties.

5.4 College Assistance in Organising Placement

In conjunction with the previous question, the next section of the questionnaire deals with the students’ perspective of the college’s input regarding the sourcing of placements. This question aimed to assess the level of the students’ needs regarding finding a new placement and endeavoured to ascertain the role of the college in this process. The results are recorded in Figure 3 overleaf.
As clearly presented in Figure 3, six students out of twenty said that they had some college assistance in organizing their clinical placement while fourteen said they had no college assistance.

When asked to expand on their responses, the researcher was pleasantly surprised to learn that most people who responded ‘no’ were very happy to source their own placement, regarding the exercise as a learning experience as they highlighted the importance of gaining independence and preparing for the future. Many students felt the college was there in the background, and when they needed help they asked for it and received it. This reflects positively on both students and the college in the area of placement and also highlights the inherent need for two way communication on a constant basis.
5.5 Art Therapy Workshop for Staff

When asked to comment on the level of knowledge and understanding the placement staff had regarding Art Therapy, the responses varied greatly. Students reported on a scale of one to five that comprehension of the concept ranged from 'no understanding' to a 'very clear' concept of Art Therapy.

The following section of the questionnaire involved asking students about their input with regard to informing staff at their placement about the concept of Art Therapy. This question was based on the idea of conducting a workshop with the staff in order to introduce Art Therapy to a staff that may or may not be familiar with this therapeutic approach. Interestingly, the vast majority of students hadn’t held a workshop.

Figure 4: Workshop for Staff.
Arguably, this question was asked in mid-November when students were barely six weeks back in college. The broader extended question asked the trainees if they thought they would do a workshop in the future with staff and also requested a reason for their answer. Those who conducted workshops expressed some doubt as to whether or not holding a workshop for staff made a difference. However, it was interesting to note the sense of hope and opportunity behind the responses of the two people who ran workshops:

**Student (X):** “I am not sure if the workshop deepened staff understanding of Art Therapy but it gave me a chance to explain boundaries and my role”.

**Student (Y):** “I think it will (make a difference) partly because I got to know the staff a little better and they might well now have a better and experiential understanding sense of what Art therapy is like”.

Equally, the many reasons for not conducting a workshop were fascinating. In digesting the responses, the unspoken idea of having ‘yet another thing’ to do was not entirely palatable at that early stage of the year. The responses recorded in the following tables are indicative of many other students’ replies.
### Table (3a): Reasons for not Conducting a Workshop with Staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Sense of...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>“I haven’t thought about it…”</td>
<td>indifference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>“I don’t feel ready…”</td>
<td>reluctance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>“There is already a full-time Art Therapists in the placement…”</td>
<td>a lack of need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>“I should…”</td>
<td>obligation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>“I intend to…”</td>
<td>procrastination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Practical difficulties

Practical difficulties also rang through and are represented in Table (3b) below:

### Table (3b): Further Reasons for not Conducting a Workshop With Staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Sense of...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>“There might not be logistically the time for the staff to participate in one all together…”</td>
<td>Logistical difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Most of the staff only come in for appointments and part-time…”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>“I am reluctant to make demands on others time”</td>
<td>Issues of time/ worthiness?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>“I am reluctant to make demands on others time”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A key tenet to remember as a trainee Art Therapist is that we are constantly required to explain and re-iterate the concept of the creative therapy. Molloy 47
(1984) and Woddis (2004) have highlighted the importance of consolidating and preserving boundaries for reasons of safety and confidentiality.

The researcher wondered if by running a staff workshop the boundaries inherent to the Art Therapy session would be better understood. A mere 10% of trainees conducted a workshop and it was interesting to note the students’ reservations in doing so. Despite their uncertainties, the students felt that the experience afforded them the opportunity to outline the boundaries of practice to staff and to also explain the role of the Art Therapist. It would be interesting to see if any more students have since run a workshop and if it made a difference to staff relations. By not running a workshop for staff, it is worth questioning if students are distancing themselves from staff and further marginalizing themselves within their place of practice (Molloy 1984)? Or are they showing a capacity to work independently despite the challenges posed? Along with Molloy (1997), Huet (1997) highlights the importance of communicating with staff and stresses the need for divergences in practice and discrepancies in approaches to be “aired and understood” (p.18).

### 5.6 Placement Supervision

The aim of this section of the inquiry was to discover if all students were being facilitated by a placement supervisor and if so, how satisfied trainees were with
their Placement Supervision. Survey responses proved that every student in second year had a placement supervisor and while the level of supervision some students had received within the last six weeks varied, the majority of students were ‘Very satisfied’ (27%) or ‘Satisfied’ (27%) with their Placement Supervision.

**Figure 5: Level of Satisfaction with Placement Supervision.**

Positive comments highlighted the support, enthusiasm and insight these qualified supervisors brought with them. The researcher was captivated by one particular comment- “It’s very difficult but massive learning” (which merited, in the student’s opinion, a tick in the ‘Very Satisfactory’ category). A further 23% of students took a neutral stance on their placement supervision, defining their supervisors lack of clarity about the role of supervision and some initial teething problems regarding
'regularity' of supervision as challenging. A students lack of confidence in their supervisors ability to understand the process and a slight sense of frustration regarding the timing of the supervisors day held by the college were also causes for concern.

18% of students responded that they were 'Dissatisfied' with their supervision. A further 5% of trainees felt 'Very Dissatisfied' with Placement Supervision. Supervisors were reported to be busy with other duties. One student felt very uncomfortable and condescending having to sit down and explain the supervisor's role to the allocated supervisor. Other reasons for dissatisfaction with Placement Supervision are included in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Reasons for Dissatisfaction with Placement Supervision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>&quot;... lack of privacy during supervision...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>&quot;...supervisor talks too much...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>&quot;...no connection on supervisor's part with clients with whom the trainee was working...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>&quot;...a lack of faith and confidence in a supervisor who doesn't always have the time and a reluctance to bring images to supervision as a result ...&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.7 Professions of Placement Supervisors

Though not a question on the original survey, the researcher later contacted the second year students to determine the professions of their placement supervisors.

Figure 6: The Different Professions of Placement Supervisors.

The findings (depicted in Fig. 6) showed that 20% of placement supervisors were Art Therapists while other professionals in a supervisory role included: (Visual) Psychotherapists/ Counsellors; Clinical Psychologists; Directors of Centres/ Head of School Completion Programme; Care Workers; Nurse Managers; Resource Teachers; Social Workers and Occupational Therapists. Interestingly and positively, qualified Art Therapists are high on the list of supervisors for Art Therapy students which is a very significant finding.
In response to the regularity of supervision that trainees were receiving on placement, 70% of students detailed that they got approximately one hour per week with the majority being very satisfied with this. 30% of students responded that their placement supervision did not comply with the recommended standards. Some students stated that they got placement supervision every few weeks; others had not yet received supervision since they started on placement. One student said supervision varied and another trainee said she had just started supervision after it was non-existent in the previous weeks.

The aim of supervision is clearly stated in IACATs Code of Ethics which promotes a ‘safe and trusting environment’ for learning to take place. Inclusive of this, the framework of supervision grants equal responsibility to supervisor and supervisee for “ensuring that the supervision time and space are utilised to the maximum benefit of the supervisee and his /her clients” (p.30). Historically, supervision has been provided by colleagues experienced in professions “other than Art Therapy” (Edwards 1994: 24). It is interesting to note in the survey findings that 20% of the current placement supervisors are qualified Art Therapists. Edwards continues to state that we are influenced by the supervision we have received and while we might view supervision from an Art Therapist as ideal, it is important to remember that “A good therapist is not always a good supervisor” Feinberg (1993).
5.8 College Supervision

The survey proceeded to question the students’ level of satisfaction with College Supervision. The results are recorded in Figure 7 below.

**Figure 7: Level of Satisfaction with College Supervision.**

![Pie chart showing levels of satisfaction with College Supervision]

Regarding College Supervision an overwhelming 35% of students ticked the ‘Satisfied’ category with a further 25% expressing that they were ‘Very Satisfied’ with college supervision. The main positives here included the enjoyment experienced in the creative element used in supervision. One trainee felt that it was the students themselves who had contributed to the “brilliant” supervision this year. A student on the part-time course commented on the ideal ratio of approximately
four students per supervisor (due to a situational change with three part-time students not continuing with training in second year).

Only 10% of students took a ‘Neutral’ stance on supervision and a substantial 25% of trainees said they felt ‘Dissatisfied’ with college supervision. A mere 5% said they were ‘Very Dissatisfied’ stating that while supervision is beneficial in exploring issues that arise on placement, they felt that feedback was vague. Another student felt that trainees would benefit more from constructive criticism, direction and suggestions in concrete form.

5.9 Students Suggestions for Improving Supervision

As an extension to this question, the researcher asked the students what changes they felt could be made to college supervision in order to benefit students more. All across the scale, students expressed their wish for more TIME within the supervision session. Many students wished for longer sessions and adequate time within the session. Other ways students felt they would benefit more from supervision included:

- A clarification of boundaries and an examination of the concept and purpose of supervision;
- The option of going to a supervisor individually if experiencing difficulties;
- Supervisor could check how much time is needed at the outset of each supervision;
- Two hours supervision instead of one and a half hours;
- The need for more direction, feedback, (concrete) suggestions, support, constructive criticism and advice and a general feeling for the supervision to be lead more;
- More focus on the images and more regularity in bringing clients artwork to college supervision;
- Fear of and dissatisfaction with being graded within college supervision;
- Choice of supervisor (as the approaches are so different);
- Individual supervision on request;
- More confidentiality between student and tutor; and
- The use of role-play and a more experiential and creative element within supervision could be useful.

The general feedback indicates that the majority of students are satisfied with college supervision. While students’ opinions are significant and valid, it is important to note where responsibility is or isn’t being taken and where blame may or may not lie in relation to what is being said. Although it has been reiterated throughout the year that students can approach tutors/supervisors if they require extra tutorials, there appears to be some reluctance on the part of the trainees to do so. This resonates with Karter’s (2002) concept of “super-vision syndrome” (p.81) and the dual “conscious effort” that is called for in order for productive supervision to occur and growth to take place (p.84). The researcher believes that of part the
problem lies in second year students adjusting to a developing course with an increasing number of students joining the MA. This leaves students with a disinclination to approach busy tutors, or ‘bother’ them, as it is clear that many demands are made on this small group of lecturers. This distancing of oneself can be hazardous for the trainee as they may be wrestling with strong feelings and struggles around the different elements of training etc.

Karter (2002) draws on supervisor and tutor Diane-Rees Roberts, who looks at supervision from a trainee’s point of view and acknowledges that it “takes a long time to know how to use supervision” (pp.84 & 85). She understands that students are not sure of what the expectations are and notes that supervision is best when the freedom is there to say what you feel no matter how outrageous it may seem. Karter (2002) agrees to a point, but relays the notion that supervisors are often simultaneously the graders of the course which leaves the student in a catch twenty-two situation. All of this ambiguity affects the student Art Therapist in their training process.

5.10 Me, Myself and I

Personal Therapy is a mandatory component of the MA in Art Therapy in Cork. In the survey 100% of the students said they were attending a personal therapist. This compliant figure benefits both client and therapist in the therapeutic alliance and
makes for a greater understanding of transference and counter-transference phenomena within the therapeutic space on placement. 99% of students claimed that therapy affected their training by highlighting the following themes:

Table 5: How Personal Therapy Affects Students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exploration/ understanding of personal issues.</td>
<td>☀ ☀ ☀ ☀ ☀ ☀ ☀ ☀ ☀ ☀ ☀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of self-esteem.</td>
<td>☀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modelling therapist’s style and approach.</td>
<td>☀ ☀ ☀ ☀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding position of client.</td>
<td>☀ ☀ ☀ ☀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support in a non-judgmental environment.</td>
<td>☀ ☀ ☀ ☀ ☀ ☀ ☀ ☀ ☀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling of reassurance/ trust/ empathy.</td>
<td>☀ ☀ ☀ ☀ ☀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Therapy as a challenge.</td>
<td>☀ ☀ ☀ ☀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the position of the client.</td>
<td>☀ ☀ ☀ ☀ ☀</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students using personal therapy as supervision.</td>
<td>☀ ☀</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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At the time of writing, one student felt the therapy didn’t influence her training. Another trainee felt that the approach used by the therapist was “pressurized”. A third student was dissatisfied with the therapist and was in the process of changing. Conversely, one student said she “couldn’t do it” without the support of her personal therapist. Many students viewed the therapist as a constant, a partner and a good role model where the quality of the relationship established between student and therapist is hugely significant.

Interestingly, two students said they sought advice from their personal therapist regarding issues arising on placement. While the researcher acknowledges the age old debate between personal therapy and supervision, it would be worth exploring what material is brought to personal therapy in relation to supervision and why? The reasons behind bringing these issues to personal therapy as opposed to college/placement supervision may shed some light on how supervision could better facilitate the trainee. It also calls for transparency on the part of the student Art Therapist and approachability on the part of the supervisor.

5.11 Art – Making Within the Process

70% of students claimed that Student Placement and training in general had an affect on their art-making process this year while 30% said it did not affect their artwork.
In expanding on how students' art-making has been affected, the researcher discovered that the responses were mixed with the majority of trainees viewing the placement and training as having a positive effect on their process. The remainder believed that their artwork was affected in a negative way. Table 6 lists some recurring themes and issues that have arisen for students in a broader context and records how many students have been affected in similar and different ways.
Table 6: Themes & Issues Affecting Art Therapy Students’ Image-making Process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recurring Themes &amp; Issues</th>
<th>No. of similar responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time and space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change of media/ transformation in artwork; looser, freer, more abstract &amp; spontaneous, intuitive, unconscious, developing, more real/ organic, deeper.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making images in relation to clients/ reflecting on sessions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disconnection with Art-making.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process, digest &amp; define experiences.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some students felt there was a lack of time to create artwork as the emphasis of training was more theoretical and literal in second year. This echoes Waller’s (1991) concern as Art Therapy training developed in the UK and feels paradoxical to the original aim of the MA in Cork which was to hold the role of the image as central to the process. While several students expressed a number of concerns around the lack of time available in the academic year to make images, the majority of people felt that the placement affected their artwork in a positive way. While some students felt disconnected from their artwork, many students felt that image-making provided a means to explore and understand the unconscious processes that were happening for them in relation to clients on placement. There is the question
of students taking responsibility for their own artwork or at least exploring in depth the reasons why artwork may be suffering. (Supplementary research on the role of image-making as a therapist has been included in the Appendices section of this paper.)

5.12 Other Major Challenges

Aside from the challenges that Clinical Placement can bring, the second year Art Therapy students highlighted other obstacles that face them as they pursue their training. The following is a lengthy list of additional attributes that students find challenging:

- Group Training;
- Financial strains;
- Challenges to personal relationships and family life;
- Interaction with and acceptance of others;
- Academic pressures and intellectual challenges;
- Long distance drive to Cork on a weekly basis;
- Loneliness of being male in a predominantly female environment;
- Struggle to be heard;
- Frustration with college timetable and organization of course; and
- Less access to all tutors due to a developing course with more and more students.
5.13 Overall Summary

The researcher has introduced the most salient aspects of the questionnaire in this section and represented the data as clearly as possible. The findings of the study have been explored and theoretical links have been sought between the students’ natural responses and the relevant literature. This has aided the researcher in coming to a greater practical understanding of the pertinent and complex issues that have been highlighted in the data presentation. The students’ responses have proven to be honest and open. The researcher is struck by the optimistic replies and positive outlook of second year full-time and part-time Art Therapy students on the MA in Art Therapy in Cork.

Overall, it is clear that Art Therapy Student Placement affects and is affected by the multiple aspects of training and many other personal and practical issues. However, these second year students appear to be committed and dedicated to the cause, and the challenges posed seem to present no impediment to their ultimate goal.
6.1 Strengths and Limitations of the Study

From the researcher's perspective, the experience of this study has been inspirational, informative and enlightening. It has also been challenging, but the challenges have led to an opportunity to explore the development of the profession of Art Therapy and gain a greater understanding of how far Ireland has come in its developmental story.

Several strengths and limitations have been noted in the implementation of this study as follows:

- It has provided the students with a voice to express their feelings in relation to the process of Art Therapy Student Placement and associated aspects. However, the questionnaire provided an assessment of a situation at a particular point in time. Therefore, it would be interesting to carry out an informal evaluation at the end of the year in relation to the same issues, and explore any significant changes in students' responses and perceptions.

- The questionnaire, while fascinating to the researcher, is overly detailed. Although it provided the researcher with great scope to explore the multiple areas linked to Student Placement, there was a naivety in the quantity of questions posed. The researcher's personal interest superseded a more precise and concise
method of questioning and a focal line of enquiry would be more desirable for this context.

- The area of study selected is extremely pertinent to current training. The subject of Student Placement is extremely broad and has inextricable links to other aspects of training. Therefore the researcher found the length of the study to be a limiting factor in the drawing of a more holistic picture within the context of Student Placement. Despite this limitation, the researcher was potentially over-ambitious and overtly passionate in the pursuit of this task and possibly endeavoured to explore an excess of material in depth. These tangents may have detracted from the main aim of the study.

- This study has been undertaken in an Irish context with particular attention paid to the MA Art Therapy in Cork. It is relevant to a particular cohort of students whose questionnaire responses reflect a representative sample and not necessarily 'the norm'. While it was the researcher’s initial wish to integrate responses from another jurisdiction, i.e. students on the MSc Art Psychotherapy in Belfast, this may have led to an alteration of the survey and added an overly complex dimension to the analysis of the data. However, the primary thought of extending the survey to a broader population led to the researcher instigating contact with course leaders on other arts therapies courses in the early stages of investigation.
6.2 Recommendations

According to the researcher, this inquiry is reminiscent of the process of Art Therapy Training. It is only having gone through this particular experience that the picture becomes somewhat clearer. In the words of Socrates (c. 470-399 BC):

"The only thing I know is that I know nothing".

Stokes (2004) notes how this philosopher cautioned against the deferral of "critical thought" while encouraging "critical reflection" (p.21). It is this constructive criticism that the researcher has ventured to adopt throughout this study and in the proposition of the following recommendations, which could beneficial to students, tutors or course organizers on the MA Art Therapy in Cork:

- Just as the researcher believes that the questionnaire would yield dissimilar data from students if completed at the end of the academic year; there is a requirement for a formal review of the college year with an assessment of the students’ experiences of the academic and experiential programme. While cognizant of the end of year distribution of evaluation forms from the college, it is the researcher’s belief that time should be allocated within the structured timetable to ensure students responses are recorded, valued, considered and acted upon if and when appropriate or possible.
• There is a call for more exploration of Art Therapy training inside and outside an Irish context. More writings on and continuous updates of the Student Placement experience could be of support to trainees in the process.

• The researcher also appreciates the need for students to interact outside of lectures to assimilate information, connect with one another and relate their experiences of the different elements of the course. This allocation of time would allow students with similar placement experiences to explore difficult issues and support each other. There is a need for an open forum of discussion on a regular basis. The researcher suggests incorporating discussion groups or peer group support into the structured timetable on a monthly basis. This allocated time could also be used to provide more support for students with regular guidance and advice within the academic component of the MA.

• Diane Rees- Roberts (2002) acknowledges that it can take a “long time to know how to use supervision” (p.84). The researcher considers the supplementary implementation of lectures on supervision to be significant, with a view to highlighting the importance of the triangular relationship between supervision, the supervisor and the supervisee. Though not approaching supervision from an Art Therapy perspective, Carroll & Gilbert (2005) highlight several practical ways of learning within supervision. These include: “Roles and Responsibilities in Supervision; Preparing for & Presenting in Supervision; Understanding Developmental Stages of Learning in Supervision; Giving and Receiving
Feedback; Learning Realistic Self-Evaluation/ Reflection/ Emotional Awareness/ How to Dialogue; Using the Supervision Group and also Dealing with Problems in Supervision". This is suggested with a view to reviewing and complementing group supervision in college, not detracting from it or criticizing it.

- Students have highlighted the lack of time available for college supervision. While this may be true, the researcher believes that the supervision process is an intense and demanding one which requires concentration and contribution. One and a half hours feels sufficient from this perspective (unless a creative approach to supervision is adopted). However, an extra hour of supervision integrated on another day would be helpful. Still, this would only be workable for full-time students and not part-time trainees who attend college one day a week. This is unfortunate as experiences with clients cannot be condensed into a five minute slot for non-presenters.

- Although much responsibility lies with the student on placement in association with the relationship between the placement supervisor and trainee, there is a need for placement supervision to be monitored more closely. Understandably, this is difficult given the constraints of time, the resources of the college and the geographical distance of the many placements. However, it is a worthy point of reflection.
While it is vital to remember that supervisors are human with their own valuable approaches to supervision, the researcher believes that the adoption of a standardized approach to supervision may be useful. Evidently students will learn in different ways from different supervisors. However, the content of that which occurs in the supervision groups and the creative approaches adopted would be beneficial on a uniform level.

Although tutors are considerate of students' time and cognizant that the theses and essays are consuming aspects of second year training, more workshops may be helpful for second year students particularly at the beginning of the academic year. Such workshops could include further exploration of: (creative) supervision; the power of creativity; boundaries; role-play; dialogue within the session; group interaction that would encourage peer support and also talks from visiting lecturers who would impart their experience of working with an array of client groups. In addition, an input from an Irish contingent of qualified Art Therapists to recount their native experiences could be inspirational and nourishing for prospective Art Therapists.

There is a need for the future development of high quality facilities for training. Student Art therapists and their tutors deserve by now to be housed in an appropriate setting where academic and experiential work can thrive.
It is not the aim of the researcher to discover any outright ‘solution’ or ways of ‘perfecting’ an already successful procedure, but where and when appropriate, changes can be made, observations can be acted upon, responses can be recorded, and situations can be regularly reviewed. It is about creating awareness in what is being done. It is not about pointing blame for what is not being done, but about facilitating change and being willing to do so despite the constant challenges that are and will continue to face Art Therapy in the future. Moreover, students need encouragement to stay with, tolerate, understand and work through the complex training process. The role of the image also needs to be remembered, utilized and explored as this creative process can, to paraphrase Jung, solve the riddles with which the intellect often wrestles in vain (1969: 86).
6.3 Conclusion

With sixty two graduates under its belt, Art Therapy Training in Cork is making an impact as a unique profession. Over eighty placement settings have been used by trainees in Ireland and more locations will undoubtedly come on stream as the geographical influx of students expands. At least nineteen qualified Art Therapists in the country have operated in a supervisory capacity for students on the MA course. This figure will also increase as recently qualified Art Therapists develop in practice and experience. Students are once again qualifying on a yearly basis after a brief hiatus in training between 2003 and 2006 due to the changes in course development from a Post-graduate Diploma to an MA in Art Therapy.

Overall, it is clear that the Student Placement experience is an essential part of the training process with between 30-40% of the curriculum being set aside for it. It could be said that this integrative element of Clinical Practice provides the challenges and opportunities that a student *needs* to experience before reaching qualification. In reflecting on the initial hypothesis for this thesis, it rings true that Student Placement comes with its pros and cons, challenges and opportunities and questions of effectiveness. But despite these obstacles, Art Therapy Student Placement continues to fulfill its role and purpose. Essentially, it provides students with an unequivocal practical experience amidst a broad spectrum of people in a range of institutions. It interlinks with every area of training and involves the commitment and dedication of the students and providers of training. Arguably, the
effectiveness of the interrelated elements of the process constantly need to be explored and examined in the ever-growing training process. However, if this imperfect situation can be perceived as an *invitation* for students to explore the idiosyncracies, ambiguities and polarities inherent to the process, rather than deny them, then the researcher believes that massive learning will take place as will personal development, despite the frustration involved in the ambivalence of experienced emotions.

In optimistic conclusion, Teasdales phrase will soon be reiterated in an Irish context. Wouldn’t it be nice to say “The Art Therapy profession in Ireland has now been released from its pioneering history”? Despite all of the challenges posed to the development of the profession, great opportunities are unfolding for Art Therapy in Ireland. One could say that “we are at the station, we are on the train, but we haven’t got off at the next stop” (Keyes & Udvari-Solner 1999).

All in good time.
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