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Crafting Moments of Well-Being

Case Studies of the Creative Europe Project *Craft Hub*

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Abstract

Craft practices can contribute to personal well-being, social inclusion, and interdisciplinary education. This can happen across individual, collaborative, and societal contexts. The Craft Hub project, supported by Creative Europe, serves as a transnational case study to demonstrate how to strengthen craft within research, highlighting its potential to enhance interdisciplinary competence and its contributions to well-being. Through the theoretical framework of salutogenesis, the study explores how craft practice can cultivate the salutogenic concept of 'a sense of coherence' through connecting what is manageable, comprehensible, and meaningful through the challenges of creating unique, handmade objects. The findings show the essential qualities of such creative moments in craft practice: (1) for individual practitioners, craft can contribute to building resilience through 'risk'-based problem solving; (2) craft practice can play a central role in communities and well-being, fostering connections through the creation of inclusive participatory spaces; and (3) craft can serve as a bridge between disciplines, enriching education, science, and research by connecting diverse methodologies to create a sense of coherence. The study concludes that research on craft practice has the potential to facilitate wider societal benefits explained through the theoretical framework of salutogenesis.

Introduction

The societal value of craft

How can craft facilitate spaces for well-being in contemporary society? Crafts can play a significant role in fostering individual growth and contributing to societal cohesion (Niedderer et al., 2024; Wood et al., 2023). They can also contribute to preserving cultural heritage and promoting aesthetic understanding while integrating technological advancements (Berg & Heimer, 2023; Riches, 2024). This is supported by a growing recognition of how particular craft practices can enhance personal well-being, mental health (Bukhave et al., 2025; Keyes et al., 2024), and social inclusion (Burns & De Meer, 2021; European Commission, 2023). Building on these understandings, this paper highlights the ability of craft to foster a sense of cohesion and well-being at an individual level and the underused potential of craft practice to contribute a health benefit to society as a whole, creating spaces for moments of both personal and collective well-being. If social engagement is a prerequisite for strengthening public health (Lundström et al., 2025), then a better understanding of how craft communities can contribute to this aim is needed. In this context, the research question posed by this paper, *'How can craft facilitate spaces for well-being in contemporary society?'* is both timely and significant.

This study explores how crafts can enhance well-being, facilitate societal coherence, and contribute to social inclusion through a theoretical framework based on the theory of salutogenesis, a pathway to health promoted by Antonovsky (2003) and explored in an educational setting of health and technology (Berg et al., 2023).

The research design of the study utilizes case studies related to the Creative Europe EU Craft Hub project at Oslo Metropolitan University and Swansea College of Art, UWTSD. The scope of this paper is limited to a small selection of case studies, providing a focused snapshot rather than a comprehensive overview of the project delivery, which is presented in the Craft Hub Catalogue (Riches et al., 2024). We explore the assumption that craft can facilitate well-being, defined in the context of salutogenesis as linked to people's general need to experience 'a sense of coherence' (Antonovsky, 2003) based on the central concepts of life experiences being *manageable, comprehensible*, and *meaningful*. While salutogenesis relates to wider holistic health care, including mental health, participant well-being, the remit of this sample study, falls outside the medical model of health as it is not a diagnostic entity (Guatam et al., 2024; Wren-Lewis & Alexandrova, 2021).

This paper illustrates how craft can facilitate moments of well-being, as defined by salutogenesis, through practical participation. It is outside the scope of the presented case studies to consider and measure how craft can impact long-term or sustained well-being. The qualitative case studies are based on a hermeneutic approach, based on the participants' pre-understanding, their life worlds, and their basis in their own craft practices (Gadamer, 2004; Gillo, 2021). Due to the subjective perspectives in the analytical framework, the findings are indicative rather than definitive; observations are practice/workshop-specific and 'of the moment'. The case study research design (Yin, 2008) deepens the understanding of existing theory, especially the concept of salutogenesis (Antonovsky, 1993) in a craft context and has the potential to be scaled up. Identified areas for further research are also suggested in the study, which could contribute to the field or support future initiatives to gather evidence of the health-promoting potential of crafts.

There is a growing interest in the arts and health and the evidence-based benefits of this combination (Bukhave et al., 2025; Ingeberg et al., 2012; Wikstrom, 2001), but more studies on this topic are needed. The EU New European Bauhaus is a political research framework that promotes aesthetics, inclusion, and collaboration and paves the way for human sciences and the arts to play a more essential role in research projects (Blanco Lage, 2023; Deserti & Puerari, 2025; Nunes, 2024).

Craft Hub was a collaborative transnational project involving nine academic, industry, and advocacy partner organizations. The case studies selected for this paper originated from two

university partners: Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet) and the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD). Swansea College of Art, UWTSD was established in 1853 and is the oldest art school in Wales. At its very conception, Swansea College of Art aligned art and craft education with the wider context of industry and vocational skills in response to the manufacturing needs of the Industrial Revolution. Today, Swansea College of Art, UWTSD has retained its own unique identity and is central to the city's thriving arts scene. The campus has retained traditional equipment and processes in the areas of ceramics, printmaking, stained glass, and photography, and students are able to explore these disciplines in combination with access to the latest technology and partnerships with the faculties of science and engineering.

The Craft Hub partner institution in Norway was Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet), including the Department of Product Design, first established in 1917, and the Department of Art Design and Drama, established in 1875. The longstanding role of crafts in Norway has been influenced by teacher education of arts and crafts at Nääs Crafts School in Sweden. Nääs castle was in 1880 functioning as an international centre that at the time promoted radical ideas about integrating the arts into children's education, including singing, dancing, sports, and arts and crafts (Punzi et al., 2024).

Background: Craft and social inclusion

The Craft Hub project, supported by Creative Europe, aimed to enhance craft practices through transnational experiences, education, and training (European Commission, 2023; Riches et al., 2024). The project focused on building capacity for craft practitioners, increasing participation and understanding of crafts, documenting and preserving craft skills, and developing training methods for current and future craft practitioners.

Craft Hub was initiated by artist and researcher Shelley Doolan at UWTSD in 2016 (Berg, 2023) and evolved with contributions from all partners, successfully securing funding in 2020 under the leadership of Carlow County Council (CCC) (Riches et al., 2024). The closing conference and the exhibition highlighted the key attributes of the project and suggested multiple future directions (Riches et al., 2024). The conference, titled 'Transformation: Effect and Affect of Craft in Society', was closely linked to the OsloMet exhibition 'Transform' at the university campus gallery. Together, the conference and the exhibition articulated two interconnected perspectives of the Craft Hub project. In this study, participants in the Craft Hub project provide case studies (Yin, 2008) of lived experiences and a basis for reflection on how crafts can facilitate inclusive spaces for well-being. This includes a discussion on the position of crafts between traditional handiwork and modern technology and an exploration of how this can influence cultural heritage, aesthetics, and technological advancement.

Theoretical and methodical framework

Employing a qualitative, embedded case study method to address the research question is pertinent, as it can enhance comprehension of the subject through real-life experiences (Flyvbjerg, 2004; Yin, 2008). The contemporary concept of craft is expansive, as illustrated in works such as Richard Sennett's *The Craftsman*, in which digital competence is perceived as a craft (Sennett, 2008), and the Scandinavian tradition of *slojd*, or handicraft, in which practical skills with natural materials are paramount. Craft spans from everyday activities of repairing to contemporary art installations as well as digital skills.

This paper is based on an assumed distinction between well-being and mental health (Guatam et al., 2024; Wren-Lewis & Alexandrova, 2021). Simon Keller (2020) positions well-being as a matter of ethical and personal reflection and, consequently, as a term that is widely diverse, subjective, and subject to fluctuation. Keller's understanding of well-being as fundamentally about 'being happy, being content, and relating well to those around you and the world at large' provides a definition consistent with the concerns of this paper (Keller, 2019). The case studies were not designed or delivered with a specific purpose to improve well-being but incorporate a concept of well-being analysed through the theoretical framework of salutogenesis, which links the development of 'movements towards health' with a sense of coherence, manifested through the concepts of *comprehensibility*, *manageability*, and *meaningfulness* (Lindström & Eriksson, 2005). Analysis through the framework of salutogenesis can retrospectively identify qualities in moments of well-being in the selected participatory craft-making spaces, highlighting the specific potential connections between participation in craft and well-being in each case. Such an analysis of crafts through the lens of salutogenesis (Antonovsky, 1993; Berg et al., 2023; Lindström & Eriksson, 2006; Mittelmark et al., 2017) is needed because it can identify ways in which the practising of crafts might foster well-being but also inspire future research projects.

Consistent with the case study methodology, the cases are structured in relation to the theoretical assumptions of salutogenesis to modify and deepen the understandings gained (Flyvbjerg, 2004; Yin, 2008). Through concept mapping and pattern matching, the theoretical underpinnings of salutogenesis are applied to expand its conceptual framework in relation to craft practice. The preliminary theoretical assumptions (Blanco Lage, 2023; Deserti & Puerari, 2025; Ingeberg et al., 2012; Nunes, 2024; Pye, 1978) in the Craft Hub case studies indicate the potential of craft to facilitate well-being through creating a 'sense of coherence' across different participatory contexts:

1. Craft practice includes the 'workmanship of risk' and problem-solving skills in individual and collaborative craft practice (Pye, 1978).

2. Craft contributes to moments of well-being in health contexts (Ingeberg et al., 2012).
3. Craft contributes to well-being and interdisciplinary creativity in education (Blanco Lage, 2023; Deserti & Puerari, 2025; Nunes, 2024).

These assumptions are investigated through three embedded case studies focusing on the salutogenic concepts of manageable, comprehensible, and meaningful (Antonovsky, 1993) to unravel the meaning of these concepts in the specific cases. The three cases were chosen as real-life examples based on a strategic development of the research design from individual to collaborative to educational:

Case Study 1—Ended Eras. Craft seen as a space for individual practice. The craft art project Ended Eras was chosen because it is about craft space as a creative process, collaboration and exhibition practice, and artistic research.

Case Study 2—Experimental brush-making. Craft seen as a space for community cohesion.

Experimental brush-making was chosen because it is about community craft-making in a workshop for beginners, the creative process, breaking down barriers to inclusion in craft, and well-being.

Case Study 3—Introduction to botanical dyeing. Craft seen as a space for education. An introduction to botanical dyeing was chosen for its focus on ecological sustainability, which illustrates how craft can serve as a bridge between disciplines, fostering interdisciplinary creativity and facilitating a wider societal sense of cohesion and well-being.

These three case studies were selected as a sample that allows for the consideration of craft's potential to facilitate spaces of well-being, not only through individual practice but also in collective activity and through its wider societal contributions. Together, the three cases form a unity that complement both each other and the initial theoretical assumptions (Flyvbjerg, 2004) to create a deeper understanding of the potential of the spaces of craft to facilitate well-being in the context of salutogenesis and to identify areas that could benefit from further research.

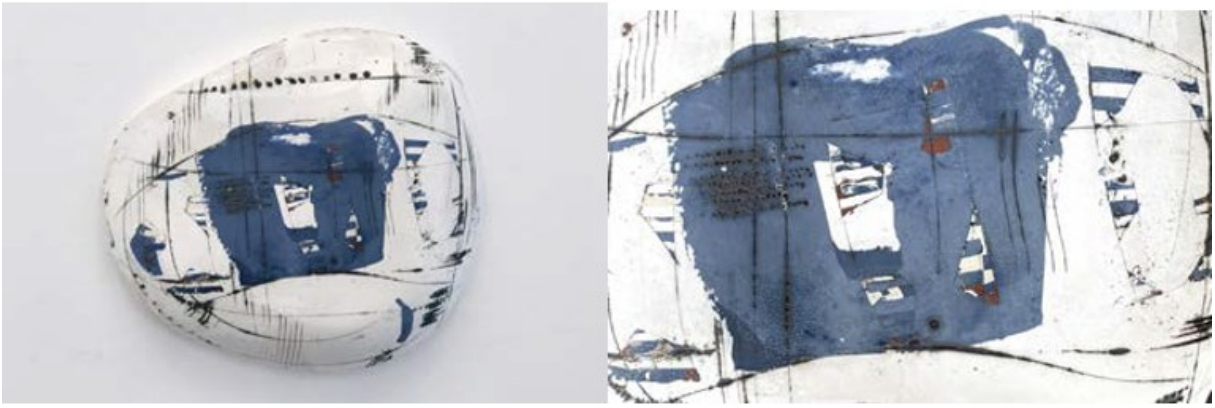
Case Studies

Case study 1—Ended Eras: Crafting moments of well-being in a personal space

Exposure to materials provides a sensory understanding that is crucial for appreciating their inherent qualities. In this context, Arild Skarsfjord Berg expanded studies on how the aesthetics of materials in his works are grounded in real-life experiences and the poetic potential of everyday situations (Berg, 2014). This perspective on material aesthetics is applicable to numerous other artists, as well as the traces of human presence evident in their creations. In the Craft Hub Catalogue (Riches et. al, 2024, p. 410) (Figure 1) the art object was described like this: 'I explore the ceramic surface and the aesthetic experiences found in the material into a ceramic object. It is a new architectural sign inviting to touch and reflection.'

Figure 1

Sign*, wall sculpture in porcelain, Arild Skarsfjord Berg, Craft Hub exhibition, Transform, 2023.*



Since the end of the Craft Hub project, Berg has developed his craft practice through a combination of ceramics and garments (Figures 2 and 3). The loss of his parents has ushered him into a phase of life characterized by introspection on themes such as ageing, illness, and life's fleeting nature. This personal experience has driven Berg to delve deeply into concepts surrounding death, the process of dying, and the inherent impermanence of existence.

In his series 'Ended Eras', Berg explores these themes through the medium of garments and ceramic tiles. He crafts portraits that incorporate clothing from his family and friends, including his father's wool sweater, his son's waiter shirts, and his nephew's outgrown workout clothes. Each portrait is an assemblage of layered garments, handmade porcelain tiles, and cotton string, with each piece narrating its own distinct, personal story.

Figure 2

*'*Ended Eras*'. A series of portraits with ceramic tiles and garments, 2025.*



The interplay between materiality and individual perception is central to Berg's artwork, which is rooted in artistic research and the examination of singular events (Varto, 2009). Varto's approach seeks a deeper understanding through hermeneutic and descriptive methodologies. Hermeneutics posits that each person experiences phenomena uniquely, and these experiences are shaped by individual differences. Descriptive methods allow for the sharing of these experiences, although they are inherently limited by one's personal understanding, merely capturing facets of the phenomenon itself (Gadamer, 2004, p. 480).

The value of individual perspectives within a broader context is a topic explored by Paterson and Zderad (1988) in the field of humanistic nursing. They draw inspiration from Herman Hesse's novel *Demian*, which emphasizes the singularity of each individual as a unique intersection of worldly phenomena (Paterson & Zderad, 1988, p. 69).

Figure 3

Left: 'A land far North', tiles, my mother's garments, 2024. Right: 'Give me your hand', tiles, garments from a friend, 2025.



Table 1

Pattern matching in the case study analysis of sense of coherence in the crafts (Case Study 1).

	CONCEPT		
SENSE OF COHERENCE	CRAFT SPACES IN INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE	CRAFT SPACES IN THE COMMUNITY	CRAFT SPACES IN EDUCATION
Manageable	The poetics of everyday situations. Touching materials to encourage contemplation.	Combining craft with objects from family and friends. Sharing personal stories.	Singular events (Varto, 2009). Describing the phenomenon itself (Gadamer, 2004).

	CONCEPT		
SENSE OF COHERENCE	CRAFT SPACES IN INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE	CRAFT SPACES IN THE COMMUNITY	CRAFT SPACES IN EDUCATION
	Introspection of life's fleeting nature.	Sharing material experiences.	The value of individual perspectives within a broader context (Paterson & Zderad, 1988).
Comprehensible	Understanding and exploring one's own life situation. The aesthetics of materials in works grounded in real-life experiences.		Self-realization (Varto, 2009).
Meaningful	Self-understanding.	The object serves as a novel architectural sign, inviting interaction. Communication with others.	Understanding of self in ecological context (Næss, 1986). Exploring both the mundane and extraordinary aspects of people's interactions with their surroundings (Tilley, 2006, p. 70).

Artistic research projects can document unique artistic processes and contribute to the growing field of artistic inquiry (Varto, 2009, p. 143). These perspectives align with research traditions in material culture that blur distinctions between humans and their environment, aiming to explore both the mundane and extraordinary aspects of people's interactions with their surroundings (Tilley, 2006, p. 70). This approach resonates with ecological and sustainable worldviews, where self-realization is achieved through recognizing oneself in

others and the environment, fostering a deeper understanding of reality and self—a concept referred to as deepened realism (Næss, 1986, p. 29).

Case study 2—Experimental brush-making: Crafting moments of well-being in community craft spaces

Rosa Harradine is an artisan who specializes in crafting brushes and brooms using natural materials, with the dual objective of ensuring both aesthetic appeal and practical utility (Figure 4). Her creations are designed to be entirely compostable at the end of their lifecycle, and she incorporates all waste trimmings from the production process into her compost heap.

Figure 4

One series of Craft Hub workshops was about making brushes.



Operating from her garden workshop in Carmarthen, Wales, Harradine sources wood for broom handles from her own small woodland area. Her long-term aspiration includes cultivating her own fibres for full-sized brooms and growing plants for natural dye production. This endeavour aligns with her commitment to minimizing environmental impact, representing a significant step towards achieving sustainability.

Rosa Harradine's brush-making workshops were delivered as part of Craft Hub's Festival of Craft programme held in Swansea in September 2023 in several venues in and around the city centre, including a public park and the cultural heritage centre. The organized and well-defined structure of these workshops ensured that participants walked away with a new skill—crafting brushes using sustainable materials and natural fibres (Figure 5). The sessions highlighted how craft serves as a problem-solving activity, with brush-making being a universal practice found across cultures.

Figure 5

The participants brought home their brushes after the Craft Hub workshops.



The Craft Hub workshops, and particularly those delivered as part of the Craft Hub festival, were hugely successful in reaching new audiences for craft practice. The educational programme proved to be a valuable way of engaging with diverse audiences and introducing craft in a 'safe space', boosting the confidence of the participants and encouraging future participation in craft practice, experimentation, and training.

The brush-making workshops incorporated elements similar to occupational therapy, emphasizing rhythm and collaborative creation as the participants sat together in a circle and creating a space for rhythmic process and contemplation. The conversations between the participants followed the ebb and flow of the making process, drifting off as the material

process required more sustained attention and concentration. This focus on the here and now and the natural rhythms of making create comfortable spaces for silence, self-reflection, and affirmation (Gulliksen, 2023). The aesthetics of the materials in both the brush-making workshop and the natural dyeing workshop were an intrinsic component of the craft-making experience, in which a tactile interaction with natural materials engaged the participants' senses. This embodied cognition and activity embeds learning in a 'body mindfulness' that can enhance and sustain well-being (Payne & Brooks, 2020). Using materials that were familiar and recognizable, such as dried grass, hemp rope, and everyday plants such as brambles, the unremarkable and everyday became transformed into aesthetic objects that held significant personal associations and value.

Table 2

Pattern matching in the case study analysis of sense of coherence in the crafts. (Case Study 2).

	CONCEPTS		
SENSE OF COHERENCE	CRAFT SPACES IN INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE	CRAFT SPACES IN THE COMMUNITY	CRAFT SPACES IN EDUCATION
Manageable	Owning something you made yourself. Bringing it to your home. A part of identity adds something to your own story. Personal memories of mastering. Material touch encouraging contemplation (Huotilainen et al., 2018).	Making functional objects in a collaborative space. Working in a safe space for social interaction. Working in an inclusive and welcoming environment.	Relationship to things and sustainable consumption. Connection to cultural heritage. Phenomenological engagement with activity (Gadamer, 2004).

	CONCEPTS		
SENSE OF COHERENCE	CRAFT SPACES IN INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE	CRAFT SPACES IN THE COMMUNITY	CRAFT SPACES IN EDUCATION
	Escape from the everyday; a space for yourself.		
Comprehensible	Rearranging the fibres and transforming them into a functional object. The self-confidence gained in being able to produce a usable object. Finishing the task.		Understanding of self in an ecological context (Næss, 1986).
Meaningful	Embodied understanding.	Solving your own problems by making things that are needed.	Problem solving competence (Pye, 1978).

Case study 3—An introduction to botanical dyeing: Crafting moments of well-being in educational spaces

Welsh textile artist Siân Lester is an artist with a long-established career in textiles, specializing in sustainable approaches associated with her season-based dyeing, art, and research. She integrates and shares these processes within her visual and socially engaged arts practice. Over the last 10 years, Siân has focused on experimenting extensively with plant dyes and has attended many international natural dye conferences, where she has

learnt from master dyers, evolving her thinking and making.

Figure 6

Sustainable dyeing of textiles with plants.



Her practice and teaching are moving away from commercial, chemical-based textile processes to a slower, kinder, and more ethical approach, rooted within the rhythms and cycles of the environment. Siân's methods encourage multi-sensory bonds with plants and colour, supporting biophilic and conscious connections to place, land, and local ecologies.

Siân shared her knowledge and skills in a one-day introductory botanical dyeing and shibori workshop at the Craft Hub Festival, Swansea College of Art. The participants explored a range of both foraged and global plants, some with close links to the heritage and history of Wales, and learned how to successfully make up dye baths to dye cloth and achieve a spectrum of colourful, long-lasting hues from an accessible range of plant and food sources. Playing with the resist techniques of shibori to create marks and patterns on cloth, Siân helped the participants to make a record of all the dyeing, meaning that each participant left with a small logbook for future reference.

Figure 7

Dye baths were used to achieve a spectrum of colourful, long-lasting hues in textiles.



Table 3

Pattern matching in the case study analysis of sense of coherence in the crafts (Case Study 3).

	CONCEPTS		
SENSE OF COHERENCE	CRAFT SPACES IN INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE	SENSE OF COHERENCE	CRAFT SPACES IN INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE
Manageable	Owning something you made yourself. Introspective. Connection to nature.	Comparing one's own approach with the practices of others.	Biophilia. Well-being and nature.
Comprehensible	Learning to create natural dyes. Record keeping, organizing, and cataloguing findings. Aesthetics of materials in works grounded in real-life experiences.	Relationship to the natural environment. Community engagement.	Pedagogical practice.
Meaningful	Hands-on approach to learning.	Ecological sustainability of practice.	Participatory practice-based research.

By holding these workshops in the university studios, the participant group, which included students and members of the local community, not only benefitted from access to specialist workshop facilities, but those new to the university also received a low-key and friendly welcome to the institution that might, for some, have otherwise seemed daunting.

Craft and Well-being

Through the prism of salutogenesis, this paper has illustrated moments of well-being facilitated by craft practices in workshops that represent three spatial parameters: individual, community, and research-based education in craft. The findings indicate a potential for further research into the wider societal benefits of participatory craft practice.

Craft spaces that position the world as manageable

David Pye's definition of craft differentiates between the 'workmanship of certainty', typically associated with mass production, and the 'workmanship of risk', often linked to unique or short-series work (Pye, 1978). This distinction influences the aesthetic quality and character of the work, whether 'free' or 'regulated'. Pye discusses Ruskin's theory of workmanship (Ruskin, 2009) and proposes a framework for rational and intelligent discourse on the significant but often overlooked subject of workmanship.

The case studies in this paper demonstrate a deep understanding of the assumption of how craft practice promotes the 'workmanship of risk' and problem-solving skills in individual and collaborative craft practice (Pye, 1978). Engaging in craft practice can be a deeply introspective journey that encourages individuals to reflect on their personal experiences and emotions, potentially fostering a sense of self-understanding. This introspection may be crucial in developing problem-solving skills, as it enables crafters to critically assess their methods and outcomes. Crafting is often a personal journey that can liberate individuals from a viewer-centric focus, shifting the emphasis from external validation to personal growth and learning. This shift might promote risk-taking and experimentation, which are essential components of effective problem-solving.

The process of learning traditional crafts such as spinning, weaving, and applying natural dyes often necessitates a hands-on approach where mistakes can become opportunities for growth. The 'workmanship of risk' is evident as individuals navigate the complexities of each technique, potentially developing resilience and adaptability. Resilience in craft often involves the creation process, where challenges arise and require solutions (May, 1975). This was especially pertinent in the natural dyeing workshops, where despite following detailed instructions, inevitable inconsistencies in the natural ingredients can result in inconsistent outcomes requiring individual troubleshooting to identify adaptations and implement change to reach the desired outcome.

The sense of ownership over a crafted object can be empowering, serving as a testament to one's ability to overcome challenges and solve problems creatively. This ownership might build confidence in one's problem-solving skills and reinforce the value of embracing risk in craftsmanship. Mastering a craft involves overcoming numerous obstacles, which can

engrain problem-solving skills. These personal memories of mastering may serve as reminders of one's capability to navigate complexities and emerge successful.

Crafting transforms raw materials into functional objects, exemplifying problem-solving in action. This transformation requires a comprehensive understanding of the properties of materials and how they can be manipulated, which is a practical application of the 'workmanship of risk'. Moreover, craft practice often involves the poetics of everyday situations, where mundane materials are transformed into meaningful objects. This transformation necessitates creative problem-solving and an ability to see potential where others might see limitations. The tactile nature of craft materials can encourage contemplation and introspection, techniques integral to problem-solving as they allow individuals to consider various approaches and outcomes.

Crafting can lead to introspection about life's fleeting nature, possibly prompting individuals to explore their own life situations. This exploration might enhance problem-solving skills by encouraging a deeper understanding of personal challenges and opportunities. Craft practice provides a platform for individuals to understand and explore their own life situations, which can be crucial for effective problem-solving as it enables crafters to approach challenges with insight and creativity.

The aesthetics of materials used in craft are often grounded in real-life experiences, which can enrich the problem-solving process. By drawing on personal experiences, crafters can develop innovative solutions that are both practical and meaningful. Ultimately, craft practice can foster self-understanding, a key component of effective problem-solving. By engaging with materials and techniques, individuals gain insight into their capabilities and limitations, allowing them to approach challenges with confidence and creativity.

Craft practice exemplifies and deepens the concept of the 'workmanship of risk' by potentially fostering problem-solving skills through introspection, personal growth, and hands-on learning. These aspects of craft spaces in individual practice highlight the transformative power of craftsmanship in developing resilience and adaptability—key components in managing our world and creating space for well-being.

Comprehensible Craft Spaces, Creating Perceptions of Clarity, Order and Structure

Craft in health contexts can support moments of well-being (Ingeberg et al., 2012). Workshops that engage makers and facilitate interactions among participants can play a significant role in facilitating the well-being of practitioners (Huotilainen et al., 2018), while social creative activities have been shown to alleviate loneliness in participants with

emotional synchrony, prompted by a regular shared activity (Wood et al., 2023). In the Craft Hub workshops, emotional bonding and empathetic support emerged. This was evident in the brush-making case study illustrated, in feedback and observations related to other craft workshops, such as wreath-making, and in the pop-up city centre workshops delivered as part of the Craft Hub festival. These observations were consistent with existing findings on the well-being benefits of specific craft-based engagement (Nevay et al., 2019).

In these collaborative spaces, individuals can work together to create functional objects, addressing both personal and communal needs. This collaborative environment can encourage participants to solve their own problems through creativity and craftsmanship, reinforcing a sense of agency and empowerment. By comparing their approaches to others' practices, individuals may gain insights into different problem-solving strategies, which can enhance their mental resilience and adaptability.

Within communal craft spaces, individuals can engage with objects that hold personal significance, often combining materials from family and friends. This act of crafting becomes a potential conduit for sharing personal stories and material experiences, fostering a sense of salutogenic belonging among the participants (Lundström et al., 2025). The crafted object can serve as a novel architectural sign, inviting interaction and communication with others, thereby potentially promoting social cohesion and mental well-being.

The aesthetics of materials used in craft are often grounded in real-life experiences, which can enrich the problem-solving process. In the work of Arild Skarsfjord Berg, this links to philosophical and thematic reflections of family, relationships, and loss. By drawing on personal experiences, crafters can develop innovative solutions that are both practical and meaningful. The benefits of introspective and reflective craft practice are not restricted to individual practice but can also be integrated into community craft engagement. In the natural dye–making workshop, the process of collecting the raw ingredients, spending time in nature, and developing a familiarity with the plants and the natural environment developed a material connection that is carried through the subsequent process of dye-making. Creating space for moments of reflection and connection in the craft-making process can foster self-understanding, a key component of self-directed well-being support.

Meaningful Collaborative Craft Spaces That Create Purpose

The case studies demonstrate a deepened understanding of the assumption of how craft can foster collaborative creativity and create meaningful spaces that develop purpose. In both Norway and Wales, compulsory education places a strong focus on the development of life skills, including resilience, health and well-being, and sustainability (Helmersen & Horverak, 2024; Welsh Government, 2020). In the Welsh curriculum, this is linked to key skills including

creative development. Recent research has evidenced that activities which facilitate well-being, particularly those that establish a sense of safety and connectedness, are key components in holistically supporting pupils who struggle with school attendance (ImpactEd, in Hammond-Price et. al., 2025) This links with the key outcomes from craft participation in the selected case studies and suggests that further research, perhaps unpicking the relationship between well-being and craft participation in an educational context, could help inform school-refusal research and policies.

Craft spaces in academia can encourage a relationship with objects and promote sustainable consumption, which may lead to innovative solutions in scientific research. By integrating cultural heritage and problem-solving competence, craft practice can contribute to a deeper understanding of scientific phenomena and foster collaboration.

The natural affinity between a range of craft practices and eco-aware sustainability is suited to developing well-being through engagement in meaningful activities that have a wider societal contribution and significance (Birch et al., 2020; Uribe, 2024).While there is evidence that both exposure to nature (Plambech & Konijnendijk, 2015) and participation in craft activities can enhance and support subjective well-being (Keyes et al., 2024), further research could unpick how the interactions of purpose through craft and the context of nature might beneficially intersect. There is evidence to suggest that exposure to nature can boost creativity, and within the context of this paper, follow-up questions might focus on the value of nature/craft interventions to construct multi-disciplinary, experiential frameworks of salutogenesis.

The integration of arts and crafts into the research landscape is an ongoing discussion that highlights their potential to enrich interdisciplinary competence and well-being within the education system (Clapp & Jimenez, 2016; Quigley et al., 2017).

Moreover, craft spaces can facilitate singular events that allow researchers to describe phenomena in rich detail, as suggested by scholars such as Gadamer (2004) and Varto (2009). The value of individual perspectives within a broader context could be explored, possibly leading to self-realization and a deeper understanding of one's ecological context, as discussed by Næss (1986). Craft practice might enable researchers to explore both the mundane and extraordinary aspects of people's interactions with their surroundings, offering insights that may enhance scientific research and interdisciplinary creativity.

Concluding Remarks

Based on the qualitative analyses by using pattern matching from case study methodology (Yin, 2008) and salutogenesis (Antonovsky, 1993; Lundström et al., 2025), the theoretical

assumptions introduced in this study were adjusted in light of how the study unfolded in these craft practices. The adjusted assumptions are:

1. Craft practice fosters the 'workmanship of risk', cultivating adaptability and problem-solving skills through the challenges of creating unique, handmade objects.

2. Craft practice can play a central role in the community by potentially supporting stronger mental health through fostering connections, encouraging collaborative creation, and sharing personal stories.

3. Craft practice can serve as a bridge between disciplines, potentially enriching research-based education through diverse methodologies, fostering creativity, and encouraging a more holistic understanding of complex issues.

Crafts possess a distinctive capacity to forge meaningful spaces for both individual and collective experiences. Initiatives such as the Craft Hub exemplify how crafts can enhance well-being and foster social inclusion, demonstrating their potential impact. By weaving crafts into educational curricula and broader societal contexts, we can cultivate a more inclusive and resilient society that appreciates and nurtures creativity and craft skills.

The outcomes of the Craft Hub project go beyond the direct benefit of knowledge exchange and skills development, encompassing social inclusion and well-being. It is perhaps this latter consideration that has been especially rewarding and something that would benefit from further research. Concepts of well-being are necessarily subjective, and developing well-being has value, even as it fluctuates or occurs in momentary spaces. While the Craft Hub workshops reinforced existing findings that evidence how craft practice, across a range of specialisms, is able to facilitate well-being through participatory engagement, further research is needed to unpick how and why this occurs. Furthermore, considering the integration of technologies in craft education, there is value in examining the interfaces of craft and the natural environment to better understand how, in combination, they create a framework for cohesion that could help support personal and societal well-being and potentially offer new insights into pedagogical practices situated in academia and through inclusive community engagement. Funding directed towards arts and health initiatives would be instrumental in supporting these endeavours, enabling a deeper understanding of how crafts contribute to personal and community well-being.

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