

Relational Child & Youth Care Practice

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Relational Child & Youth Care Practice

(formerly *The Journal of Child & Youth Care*, established 1982) is committed to promoting and supporting the profession of Child and Youth Care through disseminating the knowledge and experience of individuals involved in the day-to-day lives of young people.

This commitment is founded upon the belief that all human issues, including personal growth and development, are essentially "relational".

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What does a collection tell us about ourselves?

Heather Snell

Collections are important; important for content and for what they tell us about a person, a place or a thing. Collections hint at what we value, or evidence how we think. We group 'like' things together, or perhaps build collections that are united in their demonstration of diversity. These collections tell us how we arrange ideas or events; how we make meaning. And so I bring you a collection. This Special Themed issue of Relational Child and Youth Care Practice is a collection of writings about Child and Youth Care (CYC) Education. There are submissions from educators, students, and alumni; submissions from young people who are actively engaged in CYC education. There are conversations about what we teach, and how we teach; conversations about curriculum and accreditation. There are good ideas, great stories and deeply personal reflections.

And there is controversy.

CYC education sits in an uncomfortable position. At an intersection between academia and practice, it is not always easy for CYC educators to find ways to be congruent with their own curriculum content. CYC practice is after all a relational practice. We espouse doing with, not 'to' or 'for' others; we believe meaning making is a shared endeavor, and are always conscious of the impact of judging others. Traditional academia in the post-secondary world is not an easy fit with these beliefs. Reviewing the discussion notes from the Canadian CYC National Conference Educator's Day suggests there are significant challenges to contemporary CYC Education. Educators are challenged to find

ways to evaluate student work – work that is often very personal, experiential and touched by trauma but requires a ‘grade’ that is based on clear, objective academic criteria. Academics are challenged as they seek for ways to introduce students to the rigors of academic research while remaining aligned with the necessary subjectivity of relational practice. Do we teach students to ‘be’ with young people, or to write ‘about’ them in the third person? How do educators satisfy the increasing demand for credentials when indeed CYC practice is desperate for graduates who are practice ready rather than well prepared for graduate school studies?

There are questions and controversies in this collection to be sure! There is also a palpable ambivalence about the role of CYC educators as gatekeepers. There are assumptions embedded in the educational models of allied professions that suggest the post-secondary environment is the appropriate arbitrator and entrance way into professional practice. Should this be the role of CYC educators? What are the implications of this for a practice that advocates social justice, and anti-oppression? There are also debates about the ethics of CYC field work: do programs risk exposing students to vicarious trauma without providing them the necessary supports to respond to their experience and learning? There are rights issues – whenever a student is denied, or successfully placed for field work in a setting where their own particular struggles might be triggered and the student health or the well-being of the young people in care might be compromised. I suspect these are not the concerns typically faced in other post-secondary programs of study; but they are the day to day experience of many CYC educators and students. This is the nature of this collection.

Clearly there is active debate and wildly divergent opinion and approaches to CYC educational practice. This is clear when reading about the diverse models and structures of CYC field work across Canada, where even the basics of field work hours vary wildly from program to program. The work of Mike Keough and the CYC Education Board reveals a patchwork of discontinuity with regards to CYC practicums. It is too simple to prescribe the standardization of the field work hours, methods of supervision, or the integration of field and classroom learning outcomes across CYC programs. This ‘one size fits all’ approach would not be congruent with CYC practice. And the literature reviews associated with CYC field work make it clear that most of the literature supporting CYC educational pedagogy in general, and CYC field work specifically, comes from the field of social work or other allied professional education. There is a paucity of literature, research or writing documenting CYC education.

It is hoped then that this Themed Issue of RCYCP as a collection will add to what needs to be a growing body of work, and help to consolidate an emerging community of practice for CYC educators. Although there is significant diversity within this collection what does emerge is the theme of relationship. The personal accounts of the student CYC experience are moving and revealing. CYC students write about the importance of relationship to their learning and to their growth. And CYC students write about the need to go beyond the relational. There seem to be connections between CYC education and CYC relational practice. It is a difficult intersection to navigate as CYC educators nested in academic institutions are not in relational care practice with their students. Are they? CYC educators at the recent Canadian CYC Educators Day noted the privilege of being in a program that 'taught' students how to care. But these same educators also noted their own systemic privilege, and the lack of youth voice within the CYC curriculum. CYC educators in this discussion observed they sought not to be defined by a credential, identifying that their community as educators did include students. But where is the evidence of this inclusion? Indeed, these same educators then identified that "academia is the problem, not CYC identity."

So this collection tells us much about ourselves and one pathway to our profession. There is a sense of a community that aspires to be a shared process of change. I am drawn to the Educator's Day comment; the posing of the question: "Why did we choose to teach?" If a collection reveals much about the collector, then indeed the response to the question of why CYC educators teach may well be hidden in these pages.

Heather Snell

is a faculty member in the Bachelor of Child and Youth Care program at Humber College, Toronto, Canada and is the Chair of the Research Committee on the Child and Youth Care Education Accreditation Board of Canada. Her eclectic background draws her to work in the 'in-betweens' - merging disciplines, supporting collaborations, learning and building capacity while seeking excellence in child and youth care education and practice.



Refusing to Lose: A Students Journey Through Academia

Joe Blake

Keywords

Academic challenges, social injustices, barriers, support systems, personal growth, field placements

My academic journey from college into my undergrad program and now heading into the first Child and Youth Care Master's program being offered east of British Columbia has been a very exciting and inspiring experience. I have met so many amazing people on this voyage and seen and shared some truly life-changing events. Many people face challenges in their academic careers and my story is no different. There have been several bumps in the road that led to where I am now. However, the barriers I encountered seemed very unique and I have not met many people who have shared the same challenges I endured. I have always felt that educating people by spreading awareness is a powerful means for addressing social injustices. I hope my experiences may offer support to anyone who may be facing similar situations.

I started my academic career in Child and Youth Care (CYC) in 2011 when I was accepted into the Child and Youth Worker (CYW) Program at an Ontario college. People say it is hard to get accepted into a college program, but if you have all the requirements it should be a bit easier. Unfortunately, this was not the case for me. I had first applied for the CYW program in 2010 and been denied. The college sent a letter stating that this was because I did not pass a test or failed an interview. I was confused as I was not told to take a test or participate in an interview. At that time in my life I did not know I was able to fight the decision, so I merely accepted that I was not qualified.

At this time in my life I had been living with my partner in a low-income neighbourhood just north of Regent Park in Toronto. I was off and on welfare and working at any horrible low paying job I could find. This was especially difficult as I had a criminal record from a crime I committed when I was younger. During this time, I began to experience

depression as I felt my life was going nowhere. I began to self-medicate with alcohol and whatever drugs I could get my hands on. Living next to Regent Park made finding drugs rather easy so I began to abuse drugs frequently.

For the next year my life went into a downward spiral, including battling with drug addiction and breaking up with my partner at the time, leading me to have to find a new place to live quickly and almost resulting in me becoming homeless. After almost a year of living rough I decided to reapply to the CYW program and again I received a letter stating I had failed a test or interview. Again I was confused as I had not been instructed to take any tests or interviews. I then called the college and demanded to know the actual reason for being denied into the program. When I was younger I was diagnosed with having a very mild learning disability and I told the college I felt I was being discriminated against because of my learning disability. Colleges do not like being accused of being discriminatory so that got the attention of higher up people at the college who reviewed my application and immediately accepted me into the program.

When I went to the orientation for the program I spoke with a professor who would become one of my main supports during my time in college. I told her about how I was denied from the program for not passing a test or interview. She was very confused as they do not conduct testing or interviews for students applying to the CYW program. This is a clear example of how easy it is for some people to fall through the cracks of a system and how this can change people's lives. There are times in life when you cannot simply expect to win just because you have completed the requirements. Sometimes you have to refuse to lose, and really advocate for yourself and what you want to achieve.

During the CYW college program we had placement in the second semester of the first year. They have since changed that and only have placements in the second and third years. I felt first year placement was a great way to give students a real feeling of the CYC field. I was absolutely terrified entering my first placement as I had never worked with children with autism before. I expressed my fears to my professors and they offered me a great amount of support, as did my placement supervisor.

My first year placement was in a school classroom setting working with grade five children with autism. It was a great learning experience and introduced me to the needs of young children with autism and the supports they require. My second year placement was within a residential treatment facility for both male and female youth between the ages of twelve and eighteen years old. This placement in the group home was one of the best learning experiences as a CYC worker. Working with youth in a residential milieu

really gives practitioners a chance to engage with youth in almost every aspect of their life.

While doing my second year placement at the group home there was a female director who supervised two different houses, one being the location where I was placed. This director was a very negative person towards both staff and the young people we were there to support. The director would have weekly supervision meetings with staff. During these meetings the director was emotionally and verbally abusive towards staff. Seeing both male and female staff leaving the meeting in tears was a common occurrence. Many of the staff feared the director and would not dare to confront her for fear of losing their jobs. Others did their best to avoid her.

The verbal and emotional abuse from the director was not only aimed at the staff. The young people in need of support in the house also became victims of her abuse. There was one specific situation I clearly remember where the director crossed the line and was causing emotional harm to a young person in care. There was a young sixteen-year-old male who had been in care most of his life. One day he came home from school and staff suspected the young man was under the influence of marijuana. Staff also assumed that he had marijuana hidden somewhere on the house grounds.

I had not been working that day, but when I came in the next day the director was there and had learned about the situation. Staff updated me on the circumstances. The young man and I had developed a positive and therapeutic rapport so we sat in the living room together and talked about what had happened. After a quick check to see how the young man was, I asked him about the situation. I asked him if he had any marijuana hidden on the property. He said no. I then said that he and I had been working together for the last seven months and we had developed a mutual trust towards each other and I would hate for us to lose that mutual trust we worked so hard to develop. I told him that if he said he had no drugs on the property I would believe him but if he did have drugs on the property he should give them to myself, another staff or just throw it in the garbage. The young man proceeded to say that he did not want to lose the mutual trust either. He admitted that he was under the influence of marijuana the day before, but he did not bring any marijuana into the house or onto the property. To this day I still believe this young man was telling the truth.

Right in the middle of this conversation, just as I was building a trusting and positive relationship with this young man, the director stormed into the room and began to scream at him. She yelled things such as “I’m not buying your bullshit” and “Get your life together.” The director then threatened the young man with “You will be kicked out of

care if you keep this up!" The young man began to cry and yelled back at the director as he ran upstairs to his bedroom. Two days later that young man left the agency after being there for almost five years. I had the next two days off and when I came back I found out he had left care. I did not even get to say goodbye. This was the first time this situation had happened to me. Professors warn students about these kinds of situations, but there is no real way to prepare for when it happens.

At this time, I was only in my second year of placement and very new to the CYC field. However, I knew this kind of abusive behaviour was unacceptable, especially coming from a director in a so called treatment facility. At that point in my career I based almost everything I did at placement on what I was taught by my professors in college and I could never imagine any of my professors acting like this towards a young person. This director was being verbally and emotionally abusive towards the young people we were there to support.

I knew this kind of behaviour was wrong and I felt it was my responsibility to do something. I knew the staff in the house would not do anything because they feared being reprimanded or even fired. I came into this field to be a voice for youth while encouraging them to be their own advocates, so I could not sit by and allow these actions to continue. I spoke with my supervisor at placement who worked under the director, as well as my professors from college. Both encouraged me to write a letter to the top clinical director of the entire agency and let him know what I had witnessed. I wrote a detailed letter stating when and how the house director was displaying abusive behaviour towards both the staff and the young people in the house.

The moment I sent the letter I immediately began to panic. I was afraid I would lose my placement, I would not graduate on time, and I would get a bad reputation in the field before I even began my career. However, although I did have many worries about the outcome of the situation, I knew I was doing the right thing. Within the week the top clinical director came to the group home and informed the staff that the house director was no longer in charge of the two houses. If she was terminated from the agency or simply moved to a different location is still unknown. The clinical director asked to speak with me after the announcement. I feared he was going to remove me from my placement but, to my surprise, he thanked me for my actions, saying that he would like to see more people standing up for what is right and not letting negative behaviour go unnoticed. He also told me I would be welcome to join the agency after my placement was over.

At the end of our conversation the clinical director asked me, where members of the staff were while all this was happening. He told me he had spoken with the staff team

and they all agreed with my claims that the house director was being abusive, but none of them had spoken out about it. He stated that they were trained staff working in the field, and why did it take a placement student to cause this change? I told him that the staff were afraid of losing their jobs and did not want to disrupt things. I on the other hand was willing to risk losing my placement in order to do the right thing. The clinical director told me that not many people are willing to take that risk. He also asked me never to lose that drive to do the right thing, no matter what the risks may be.

This situation just goes to show that change is possible and can happen. I learned that when we want to fight for what is right we will most likely be standing alone. Once the change happens and the risks have fallen onto one person, then others will eventually lose their fear and stand with you. The reward of social justice and doing the right thing is always worth the risk. Our actions always come from either a place of love or fear. Fear should not influence our actions, which will only lead to more negativity. Do not do what is easy, do what feels right. It is worth the risks in the end.

In the third and final year of college I was in a placement that, before I started, I thought would be the perfect job for me. Unfortunately, it did not turn out that way, as the position was not what I expected. I spent the majority of my time in an office digging through filing cabinets looking for old articles for my supervisor. It was in this year that I realized I needed to have some amount of contact with youth. They are the reason I am a CYC practitioner and they give me the passion to fight for all youth and their rights.

In my final year of college, I was stressed with trying to complete all my assignments and waiting to hear if I would be accepted into the CYC Program at an Ontario University. There were only a few weeks left of class and all my classmates who applied to the university program had received their acceptance letters into the program. I began to fear the worst was happening again: that I would fall through the cracks like I did when I applied to college. My mind went wild with negative thoughts of what I would do if I was not accepted. Then the day came where I received a letter from the university. I was afraid to open it at first, but fear did not influence my decision and I opened it. Congratulations, it said, you have been accepted into the CYC Program. The joy swept over me like a warm blanket. I was going to university.

My first semester in university was filled with feelings of both fear and excitement. I had heard of the dreaded statistics class that many people had told me was extremely difficult, but I did not let fear hold me back. I was too excited about being a university student. As it turns out I ended up getting an A in the statistics class, so the fear was not even real. One thing I did notice in my first year of university was the lack of preparation I

had received from my college in APA citations. Everything had to be perfectly cited in APA format or you would fail the paper and maybe the class. My classmates and I made it a priority to learn thoroughly every little bit of APA formatting.

University was very different from the tight knit feel that college had. Some classes had up to eighty people in them and there were different people in every class. Although university was a lot more spread out there was still a magical feeling of being surrounded by so many people who shared the same passion as I did. I could talk to anyone in the class and they would have a unique perspective to share. The professors were very similar. I found myself staying late in most of my classes just talking with the professors. The professors were one of my main supports in university. They would always take the time to sit with me and discuss the assignments or simply talk about current issues.

As I had completed a three-year program at college I was considered a direct entry student at the university and therefore would only have to do the last two years of the four year program. One thing they do not tell you though, is that if you wish to complete the program in two years you have to take six classes a semester. As I was working part time this was not an option if I wanted to pass my classes so, in order to graduate within the two years, I took summer classes. During the summer I worked three part time jobs in the field while having classes four nights a week. I remember working twenty-eight days straight. This was not simply a month of working nine to five and going home, but rather it was a nine-to-five job during the week, and then rushing to the university four nights a week to have classes until nine at night. I would also work weekends. So it was a battle to persevere through the struggle of all of this. However, a person once told me always to remember that perseverance pays off.

The director of the CYC Program was especially supportive and helpful to me. I first met him when he was teaching the infamous statistics class. He made a dry and difficult class interesting. He would always stay after class and go over specific topics with any student who asked him. This professor would go on to become one of, if not the greatest, supports I was fortunate to have during my undergrad. He was obviously extremely busy and had many students to assist, but his office door was always open to me. He helped me with both academic and personal issues that I was struggling with. He introduced me to the idea of a new CYC Masters Program being developed at the university. He got the university to fund me to go across the country to several child and youth care conferences. He encouraged a classmate and I to write a proposal to present at one of the conferences, which we were later accepted for and presented at. At the conferences he introduced me to professors from other colleges and universities, established

practitioners in the field and numerous well known authors that I had studied all through college and university. This man would also make himself available to students by phone or email if he was not on campus. He truly made a large difference in my life and I strive to be as helpful to others as he was to me.

There can never be enough said about the importance of a positive support system. CYC practitioners tell this all the time to the young people they support and the same goes for us. The professors were one part of my support system, but I also had a group of classmates and friends from college who were in the university program with me. This group of positive individuals made a huge difference to all of us. We all pushed each other to do better than we would normally have settled for in our assignments. We would keep each other on track with deadlines and motivate one another when we were exhausted from exams and papers. University can be a scary place on your own, but there is no reason to face it all alone. There are so many positive people who are there to accomplish the same thing as you. Utilize those supports and create a support circle.

During my final year in my undergrad program I was to write what many programs call a thesis, but ours was labelled an independent study project. At the beginning I was extremely excited to do this assignment. Students could choose from three different approaches: we could do a literature review, a position paper, or a research paper that included doing an amount of actual research. I did my paper on the experiences of youth who had been involved in the youth criminal justice system and whether restorative justice had been utilized at all. I wanted to hear from youth first hand and know what their experiences were like. I have experienced the criminal justice system myself and my rights were violated while I was involved, but no one was there to help me navigate the system. That is partially the reason I went into the CYC field. I want to help youth who are dealing with similar situations and offer them the support I was never given.

I decided I would do a research study and write my thesis on the findings. Unfortunately, there was a massive amount of resistance from the professor teaching the class. Nevertheless, I was able to connect with the youth group who had been involved in the youth criminal justice system. The method for interviewing the youth group was in the form of a group discussion style interview. The youth in the group were extremely passionate about the topic and were aware of many of the issues and problems that exist within the current justice system. Sharing a dialog with these youths who had experienced the justice system first hand was incredibly enlightening.

A few weeks before the end of the school semester some wonderful news was shared amongst the student body: the CYC Masters Program was approved and would begin in

September of 2016. I immediately applied. In this instance I did not fear falling through the cracks, but rather that I would simply not be accepted as the program was only accepting twenty or so people. I knew there were many other practitioners in the field whose credentials and experiences greatly surpassed my own. I had fears of not being accepted into the masters program, but I just had a feeling that my academic career was not going to end here and that I would be accepted. A few weeks later I received a letter from the university. The letter said congratulations you have been accepted. I cannot describe in words the joy I felt that day. To think that I had been accepted and in twelve months I will be graduating yet again from university, but this time with a Masters of Arts in Child and Youth Care.

Despite all the barriers and the multiple challenges that I endured, I finished my independent research study, completed all other required classes and was able to graduate with honours from my undergrad program in April of 2016. I am so excited to begin the masters program this September. My academic career has not ended yet; there are still several chapters I will go through. Nonetheless I am looking forward to facing the new challenges head on and being triumphant.

Although my story is unique, I am not the only one who has had to endure challenges and barriers in order to succeed in life. There are many people out there looking for help as well as willing to offer help to those in need. This is something we should all remember. There is no reason for any of us to face challenges and struggles alone. I will never forget those who were there for me when I was in need and I hope I can do the same for others.

Joe Blake

is a graduate of the Bachelor of Arts in Child and Youth Care Program from Ryerson University (Honors) as well as the Child and Youth Worker Program at George Brown College. Joe is currently enrolled in the Child and Youth Care Masters of Arts program. He has been a co-presenter at the 18th and 19th National Child and Youth Care Conferences and a presenter at The Provincial Ontario Association of Child and Youth Care (OACYC). Joe Blake is currently working at the York Region Supervised Access Program and The Griffin Centre. Joe's interests in the field particular lie in the areas of the youth criminal justice system, restorative practices, social justice and youth advocacy.



Writing with Mark: A cross-border conversation about Mark Krueger and his literary legacy

John Korsmo and Varda Mann-Feder

It seems particularly fitting that an article about Mark Krueger and his writing be part of a special journal on education. Mark's entire career was in fact devoted to Child and Youth Care education, as the founding Director of the Youth Work Learning Center at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. His career as a professor and administrator at a leading urban institution, Mark's teaching inspired and influenced the practice of thousands of youth workers, spanning several decades. His mentorship with the authors has supported each of them in their own careers as professors, and his writing has and will always be core to Child and Youth Care curriculum.

This article captures a conversation between the two authors related to their history working with Mark Krueger, a preeminent contemporary leader in the field of youth work. The authors each worked closely with Mark to advance the Child and Youth Care literature through the *Journal of Child and Youth Care Work*, which Mark founded in 1984. At that time, it was the first journal in the field that reached out to practitioners and encouraged them to publish their insights. Mark envisioned a respectable, readable, and applicable literature venue that was by, for, and about youth work practitioners. Shortly after launching the journal, Mark took up the challenge of actively mentoring new authors, both through writing workshops at conferences and a series of articles on *Tips for Beginning Authors* (Krueger, 1989). Mark's work for the journal is instructive, not only because of its pioneering role in stimulating a dedicated literature for Child and Youth Care work, but because it serves as an apt metaphor both for the kind of leadership that

Mark Krueger provided for the field, and the ways in which he mentored us. It also is a deep expression of who Mark was as an individual.

When we heard about a possible special issue to honor the life and legacy of our friend, colleague and mentor, we knew right away we needed to submit a piece. With roughly 5,000 kilometers separating us we began with email dialogue, then phone and skype discussions before we were able to get together in person. Through our reminiscing we reflected on the reality that if not for Mark, we would not have had the chance to meet and work together and ultimately develop a friendship that has been developing for nearly 20 years. This could be said for many of us who were brought together through Mark's work.

We had much to reflect upon, and while looking over some of Mark's early work encouraging youth workers to publish their ideas, as well as his later poetry and fiction, we could hear Mark's voice speaking to us. We could visualise those bright eyes and welcoming, yet ever-so-slightly sarcastic smile of his. After thirty or forty laughter-infused declarations of what we must be sure to write about when considering his legacy, we reminded each other that this was neither a biography nor roast, but rather a brief and simple declaration of our appreciation for him as an individual and as a scholar.

We then committed what Mark would have considered a major writer's sin. We spiraled into an early editing process narrowing down what we thought were key elements of Mark's teachings that may be most salient for a reading audience. Mark's voice popped up from the pages of one of his short pieces, *The Day I Stopped Trying to Please My Mentors* (Krueger, 2010), "Who are you trying to please?... Stop trying to please those voices of authority and myth ... and try to please [your]self."

From there, multiple layers of sheer irony of our process sunk in. We were going about this all wrong. For instance, Mark would never encourage early censorship of thought. Mark would have told us to focus on what we want to say, and make our own meaning of that. In an early piece by Mark, *Tips for Beginning Writers* (Krueger, 1989), he warned, "Poor writing often comes from a compulsion to make the first draft perfect..." And while we aren't so naïve as to aim for perfection, we got the point. In that same piece for beginning writers he also instructed that, "Generally people have more than enough to say once they start writing..." (Krueger, 1989). Again he hit the nail on the head. We certainly have more than enough to say about and on behalf of Mark, our mentor.

We decided then to honor Mark's meaning to us by embracing the notions of both improvisation and rhythmic interaction – two facets of youth work for which Mark was well known. This approach then is intentional, as many of Mark's own articles were

written as narrative, and it has been noted elsewhere (Westoby & Kaplan, 2014) that dialogue practice can be seen as related to the “notion of responsive dance” (p. 214). It is in this spirit that we offer our dialogue *about* Mark, while at times referring to our time *with* Mark, in relation to the legacy he created through the literature of Child and Youth Care work. We invite readers into our personal reflections of Mark, and encourage them, as he would have done, to join the rhythm, to “think in rhizomes and poems” (Krueger, 2010), to suspend instincts to listen for truth and be prepared to insert self into the moment.

We are sitting in a hotel in Pittsburgh, after not seeing each other for nearly two years. A glass of wine in hand, and several of Mark’s earliest writings scattered around us our laughter jolts the otherwise serene ambiance of the hotel lobby. Glances from passersby are cast our way. They don’t know we are being humored by the dated nature of posthumous pros from a great man.

Computers are a big help. They can make you much more proficient. Overcoming fear seems to be a key here too. Many writers have put off learning how to use a computer and then kicked themselves later for not doing it sooner. As one of those writers, I can only say, try it, you’ll never regret you did. Writing with a computer is like working with clay. You can move words and phrases around in a much more textural way than with a pen. (1989, p. 82)

And so, laptops in hand, we begin to allow ourselves to honour Mark, not just through our words but through the kind of creative, free flowing process that he would have endorsed. Some of this exchange took place through skype, and we laughed when considering inclusion of ‘advice’ to readers to not be afraid of skype... to “try it out and enjoy in the connections and rhythmicity of the new technology” as readers thirty years from now could have a good laugh about how rudimentary technology was in the year 2015.

Whether you use a computer, typewriter, or pen, ... writing requires hard work ... (but) poor writing comes from a compulsion to make the first draft perfect. One way to free yourself of this feeling is to write about your topic as fast as you can without worrying about grammar, sentence structure or spelling. Put down all your thoughts no matter how silly they

seem. Then pick it up the next day and see how you can make it better.
(1989, p. 82)

Much of Mark's own work is characterized by the kind of freedom of expression and free association he endorsed for new writers. Reading Mark, one might have thought that he presented in person as a creative extrovert whose conversation would have been stream of consciousness-like, spontaneous, uncontrolled, unpredictable, and perhaps even loud and bombastic. Much of what Mark has written about working with youth has an edgy, charismatic, artistic vibe where it is left up to the reader to make meaning and interpret for themselves.

Imagine Matt and Nicole (youth workers) are like modern dancers. Their shift is planned (choreographed) in advance but improvised along the way ... the youth learn to dance by being with Matt and Nicole ... As they dance, several themes define their attitudes, actions, and movements. These themes are interconnected. One overlaps with or is intertwined with another, a nexus or spaghetti bowl of values, beliefs and approaches. (2004, p. 8)

In fact, Mark in the flesh, did not present to us in this way. Not only was he a small, compact man whose dress was always understated, incorporating elements of his running gear with aging hippie jeans and worn baseball cap. He rarely raised his voice to emphasize a point, speaking almost in hushed tones. He was never flowery and rarely employed superlatives. You knew Mark liked you when he offered gentle teasing, like when he called Varda "princess" or shot barbs at John for not being able to keep up with Mark's running pace despite the age difference. There were never declarations of adoration, and rarely hugs. He commanded attention and connected with the people around him not through drama, extremes of affect or noisy proclamations, but because he was down to earth, pragmatic and expressed himself with straightforwardness and a quiet irony.

Despite Mark's position as one of the most prominent academics in child and youth care, among the fathers and mothers of our field, he never grandstanded nor used his position to look down on other people. This aspect of Mark, his humble presentation of self, taken together with a gift for talking in simple truths, also came out in another

aspect of his writing: his insistence on advocating for front line workers and the value of being who you are in the work with young people.

The primary motive for being a caregiver has to be something in your center or gut or heart or all of these is telling you what you want to do. Without this feeling, there is not much that can be learned that will be helpful. (2000, Central themes in Child and Youth Care, para.2)

Mark always respected the experiences of front line workers. In fact, one of the greatest innovations he brought to CYC work was his repeated encouragement for story writing by practitioners as a respected, and in fact, essential, basis for the development of this literature. Mark's vision in creating the *Journal of Child and Youth Care Work* was to establish a peer reviewed venue where a large range of contributions could be honoured, not just (as in other related disciplines), the work of scholars.

With this first issue of Child and Youth Care Work, the National Association of Child Care Worker Associations begins a unique effort to publish articles by child and youth care workers...This is the first journal devoted entirely to articles written and reviewed by practitioners. Several approaches were considered as we searched for a message to launch the journal ... We were also tempted to direct our comments towards our doubters: the skeptics who suggested that child and youth care workers didn't have the knowledge, skills or desire to carry off such a "lofty" academic endeavor...Then the answer became clear: Child and Youth Care Work is being produced because the profession has reached the stage where it can generate the resources and energy to produce a representative publication. (1984, p. 2)

Mark's belief in honoring the contributions of all in our field translated into his generosity as a mentor and an editor. While reserved on many levels, Mark was consistently expansive in his efforts to encourage and promote others. He never ceased to encourage both of us, and in many ways launched us both in our academic careers. He stepped aside to allow us to take over in our journal work, and rarely, if ever, tried to control how we proceeded. Early on in establishing the journal, Mark provided this same encouragement by writing about writing. He even instituted workshops for new writers at

all the major conferences, and he consistently made himself available to those attending, treating every question with equal importance and respect. Not wanting to keep all the credit for himself, he started a practice of inviting editors from all the Child and Youth Care journals to dialogue with conference attendees. He especially wanted to demystify the writing process for practitioners. In 1989, he wrote “During the past five years, editors and review board members from three child and youth care journals have been conducting beginning writers’ workshops at conferences Our goal is to encourage more child and youth care workers to write for publication” (p.81).

Mark saw his mission as caring for the writing of practitioners in much the same way that front line workers care for young people. He saw the work of the journals almost as a sacred trust, in which the work of an editor is to nurture and protect the writer, while helping them to be the best that they can be. Part of the mandate of the editor of the *Journal of Child and Youth Care Work* to this day is to work with new writers, although this can be a time consuming process and highly unusual in the field of professional publishing. At the same time, Mark was a passionate advocate for professionalization. He believed that the validation of front line work and the encouragement of writing by front line workers, especially in relation to their experiences and intuitions, would inevitably lead to broader recognition for our field.

Too often these days we are presented with catchy slogans and acronyms that show little relationship to anything that has been done about the complexities of the issues, descriptions of the work and kids, that don't ring true with our experiences, and contrived statements designed to please the funders and politicians We would be a better profession, I think if we insisted more on literature that portrayed the work like it is. (2005, para. 7)

And yet, looking at the body of Mark’s own work, one notices a paradox. The soft spoken, pragmatic Mark who was a champion for the front line, for relationships and coming from one’s centre, was at times eclipsed by that other, larger than life Mark, the man with a passion for dance, poetry and metaphor. Mark loved fiction, and was extremely well read. Mark’s work is at times simple and direct, but at other times, reverberates with abstraction to the point of obtuseness. We never said, but sometimes did not totally understand him ourselves.

In what he defines a moving into self-dialogue, Moustakas (1990, p.16) argues that to know a phenomenon one has to engage in rhythmic flow with it, moving back and forth again and again until multiple meanings are discovered. ... Sometimes it is as if we are looking through a kaleidoscope. Patterns or insights often emerge as we sift and sort through the data (stories of observations, feelings and experiences). We sense how a youth feels based on previous experience. Or we interact with the material (thoughts, observations, notes and experiences) and mold it. We try to become part of the process, changing and being sensitive to how these changes influence the meaning of our interactions. (2004, p. 47)

Maybe this is not such a mystery. It really does, after all, reflect the degree to which Mark walked his talk. He advocated for workers and for youth, and had an enduring belief in the power of authenticity, the value of presence, and the need to come from your own spiritual centre (Krueger, 2000). Mark the man, the editor, the mentor, the teacher, was also Mark the artist and poet, who allowed his own centre to emerge and be expressed in unconventional and interesting ways. Mark believed in following “one’s bliss” and in the importance of the “twinkle in one’s eye” (Krueger, 2000, *Central themes in Child and Youth Care*, para. 2), and he lived that way.

There are many moments in Child and Youth Care that we won’t ever fully understand...I remember a moment with a youth just after I had to physically restrain him. We were sitting and talking quietly. He had just asked me why I was there and I was tongue tied, flooded by self-doubt and uncertainty...There is something in these moments that calls to me. I like to think of it as an existential hum. ... In hindsight, the feeling I had in that moment was sort of the feeling one gets from looking at an Edward Hopper painting, in which tension is created by what Mark Strand called the two imperatives in Hopper’s work – the urge to continue and the urge to stay. (2004)

As we attempted to wrap up our conversations about Mark and the important role he played in our lives we asked each other of lasting memories. For each of us, they hinged on the latter years of our time with Mark, and the reality that our time together ended all too soon.

John reflected on the day he told Mark that he'd be leaving Milwaukee, where he had worked under Mark's mentorship for several years.

I'd like to say he was supremely gracious in supporting my departure, but actually he used it as a barb to take shots at me for several years. In true Mark fashion this was couched in good fun, but with an undercurrent of realism. Every time we'd see each other he'd remind me that I 'abandoned him', but with just enough of a smile to keep me from feeling too guilty. He later wrote a letter of support for my application for an Assistant Professor position, in which he managed to sneak in a message of my departing him. A few years after that, he wrote a letter of support for my application for tenure and promotion, in which he once again closed with a similar barb and stated he wished he could get me back to UWM. Because of the guilt I harbored for many years for having left Milwaukee, those words, intended as a compliment, cut like a knife. I last saw Mark during a youth work conference held at UWM a few months before his death. Our last words were exchanging invitations for him to visit me and my family in Washington and for me to visit him and his in New Mexico. Regrettably, neither visit happened and I can't express how much I wish they had.

For Varda, a moment that came to mind related specifically to end of life reflections and mourning in 2004. Mark knew he was ill many years before his death, and thought deeply about the nature of his own mortality. Varda had a moving conversation with him about the nature of loss, after her own brother died, and he later wrote about it in *CYC-Online* (2009, para. 18): "Death, loss and mortality are themes in the work of most if not all, writers and workers I admire. Their quest to understand these things makes them seem more alive." During this time Mark was perhaps the most present and personally close and responsive to Varda as he had ever been.

We ran into each other by chance in the UWM cafeteria ... you [John] had just left the journal and I was there to meet with the new team. The conversation with Mark began with his acknowledgement about the recent and untimely death of my younger brother in an accident. We spontaneously began to share our experiences of death, and the difficulty we both had with the finality of losing someone close. It was

extremely poignant, because Mark was already visibly changed by his medical condition and clearly contemplating further deterioration, although he never acknowledged to me that his illness was terminal. I also remember clearly that while Mark did not hug me or obviously express any feelings in particular, the quality of his engagement in the conversation, the things he shared and particularly the intensity with which he listened to me, created a special experience of closeness. It was as if something about my loss touched him deeply, and we were able to connect on a whole new level. While I did see him several times after that, it was always in the presence of many other people and the moment had passed.

Later, Mark endured difficult surgeries, pain, and the gradual loss of his physical capacities with dignity. He rarely spoke about his discomfort or his fear and continued to be present at trainings, meetings and conferences even once he was disfigured by the illness that eventually killed him. The humility and courage to be that he expressed throughout his career, through his writing and his style of mentoring and leadership, were even more visible to all of us who had worked with him. He left us all with a model to follow in which professionalism, clarity and dedication can go hand in hand with gutsiness, creativity, playfulness and free self-expression. He believed in the power of art and science as important areas for teaching and learning in Child and Youth Care, and embodied that belief. This brought the best in him, the best in the workers he worked with and the best in us.

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John Korsmo

is a professor of Human Services at Western Washington University. His education includes a PhD in Urban Education and a Master's Degree in Educational Psychology. John has held a wide range of youth work positions, from entry-level direct service to Executive Director. He is committed to working with youth and families experiencing poverty, having published widely on the topic, and has worked in several countries, and many states in the US. He serves on numerous boards and advisory committees, including being Vice President for the Association of Child and Youth Care Practitioners in the USA



Varda Mann-Feder

is Professor of Applied Human Sciences at Concordia University in Montreal. She was the founding Graduate Program Director for the Diploma in Youth Work. Varda serves on the Child and Youth Care Accreditation Board of Canada, and has been involved in the Child and Youth Care field since 1976. She began her career as a psychologist in the child welfare system, where she was a consultant and trainer with numerous residential units and youth protection teams. Varda's research documents the experiences of youth leaving care, and the exploration of interventions that support optimal transitions.



Innovative Integrative Curriculum for CYC: weaving the tapestry of curriculum together for CYC students as emergent practitioners in a North American context

Maple Melder Crozier, Cindy Rammage and Christine Slavik

Introduction

This article discusses the reason for development of innovative curriculum and its value for Child and Youth Care (CYC) education in a North American context at the University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) in Abbotsford, BC, Canada.

UFV provides one of the 4 CYC degrees in BC, and is one of a consortium of universities whose educators agree to teach to the same learning outcomes: that is that students from all 4 programs will graduate with a common core of abilities and values. That is what binds us together as a consortium of CYC programs.

Faculty at UFV recognize the necessity of creating elective courses that supplement the core requirements, to respond to the requests of employers, practitioners, the field of CYC in general, and ultimately for the health of children, youth, and families. This means preparing competent, resilient and self-aware practitioners who engage in relational practice experientially within the classroom; the epitome of meta-curriculum. This article will speak to the integration of new curriculum that makes the UFV degree unique.

Reason for integration

Because trauma is stored in the body's nervous system and in the right hemisphere of the brain (Levine, 2010), and recruits the brain's survival mechanisms through the

limbic system and brain stem, traditional language based interventions are less effective than sensory or creative approaches.

This provides rationale for an integrated CYC curriculum that included trauma pedagogy with expressive therapeutic approaches to practice and mindfulness.

Trauma Pedagogy – Course CYC 360Q

The most important aspect of the undergraduate course about trauma is that it replicates a trauma-informed approach in the classroom. The priorities are student emotional safety, choice, understanding of resources and strengths, trauma awareness, and skill building (Arthur *et al.*, 2013)

The concept of titration guides delivery of the CYC trauma course. Titration involves exposing students to gradual doses of learning material about trauma, so as not to overwhelm them (Black, 2006). This becomes especially important when teaching students whose personal histories involve experiences of trauma, and there is a very real potential for re-traumatization (Ward, 2013). Going slowly, checking in, and titrating information with activities such as breath work, tossing bean bags, or mindful walking allows students to self-regulate, so that they can experience their feelings, stay in their bodies and think clearly in the course. Learning strategies to help each other discharge physical and emotional energy when they are activated, prepares students to apply their knowledge and skills in the life space work of CYC practice.

Building on the practice of titration, the Window of Tolerance model is shared with students, to visually express a place where those who have experienced trauma feel safe and regulated without being re-traumatized (Siegel, 1999; Briere & Scott, 2006). Both students and instructor attend to the location of self and others in the window of tolerance, as they learn strategies that will help them increase their tolerance for working with difficult situations and triggers over time.

The practice of expressive approaches is reinforced in the trauma course, through the lens of neurobiology. Students discover that trauma can deactivate the left brain, which helps us think logically and order our experiences in coherent sequences using language/words. Broca's area, a part on the left side of the brain which puts thought and feelings into words can be shut down during trauma, as well as when a person is triggered (van der Kolk, 2014). It can be hard to articulate in words the experiences that are more often felt as an image or body memory, so right brain approaches such as art, music, movement, or play help others convey their ideas without words (Malchiodi,

2008). When appropriate, expressive approaches can be integrated with words to help the logical left brain to tell the story (Siegel & Bryson, 2011).

Expressive Therapy – Course CYC 360N

When in high arousal, we are in an emotional state that does not allow us access to most of our well-developed prefrontal cortex—and executive function. We have less conscious control and more reaction. This is when expressive therapies are beneficial. These therapies are built on items that are familiar, comfortable, and used commonly by many: art, music, horticulture, adventure, and play.

Art provides an outward expression for inner feelings and ideas that might be uncomfortable to say. It is a stress and anxiety reducer.

Research (Roy, 2013) has shown the value of music in providing significant mental, physical and social benefits. In particular, restoring calm, enhancing learning, improving memories, as well as greater empathy and increased emotion recognition has been shown to improve with the introduction of music therapy techniques. Music seems to go deep into the human soul.

Horticulture is useful on many levels. The weeding itself is therapeutic; being in touch with dirt has been reported to help people feel grounded (Husted, 2012). The simple growth of plants, with little intervention, gives hope and a sense of accomplishment.

Adventure can be a way of testing one's limits. Not only being in nature (and combatting “nature deficit disorder” – Chen, 2006) but seeing yourself as a part of it leads to respect and appreciation for our world—and by extrapolation, respect and appreciation for humankind.

Play occurs throughout life. It's just the toys that change as we age. The sheer joy that comes from play is extraordinary. Turn taking, rules, sharing, feeling and expressing emotions, are all benefits that extend from play all the way into adulthood. It allows for relief of stress, and a sense of accomplishment. Role-play and dress-up are infused as they allow a person to step outside him or herself and discuss things untellable. Adam and Galinsky (2012) support the notion that the clothes we wear or dress up in have psychological impact as well as physical.

The relevance of this course is proven every time it is offered by the mental health benefits to the university students. Grey (2010) conjectures that the decline of free play is significantly related to the increase in mental health disorders.

Another unique characteristic of this course is that it is taught by 5 different instructors, all therapists in their respective fields, making this truly interdisciplinary. The

classes have theory provided via posted journal articles, but are primarily hands-on, workshop style, with demonstration and practice of techniques.

There is one culminating essay assignment in the course, generally based on application of the therapies to a current event, such as the Boston Marathon bombing, the Syrian Refugee crisis, or most recently the Canadian Indigenous Truth and Reconciliation Commission and recommendations.

Mindfulness – Course CYC 3600

Mindfulness, a concept with deep roots in alternative practices, is gaining increasing favour and understanding in contemporary health and well-being. In a course designed to introduce CYC students to mindfulness-based stress reduction and the neurobiology of mindfulness, the foundations and benefits of mindfulness are examined.

In a 2012 article of University Affairs, a magazine published by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada titled, *Cultivating Minds and Hearts*, author Rosales (2012) wondered how we might incorporate contemplative practices, often termed mindfulness, into university teaching to help students become more reflective and engaged as citizens.

Across disciplines many individuals are working towards mindfulness in education (Odahowski, 2004). Odahowski (2004) refers to these individuals as “Compassion Generators,” working to generate mindfulness curriculum in all levels of education. Compassion development requires an integration of the mind, body and heart. The Dalai Lama believes the “seeds of compassion” are present in each of us and it is through education that compassion can be nurtured and sustained (Green, 2012). Education that fosters connections, meaning and introspection affords relevance and provides students with the inspiration, enthusiasm and opportunities to create new possibilities (Odahowski, 2004). Inspired by the discovery of previous research and encouraging results in this area, mindfulness was developed as an elective CYC course.

A review of research conducted over the last four decades highlights three key reasons that support the potential utilization of meditative or contemplative practices in higher education, that is, the enhancement of cognitive and academic performance, the management of academic-related stress, and the systematic development of a personal and professional practice context (Barbezat & Pingree, 2012).

The Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program developed at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, by Jon Kabat-Zinn (2013) is the foundation for this very practical and experiential course. Step-by-step guidance and presentations

are systematically utilized to introduce students to MBSR in a group format. Group discussion and specific strategies for cultivating awareness is introduced. Students can be expected to participate in practices of breathing, meditation, gentle stretching and simply yoga exercises. The theoretical foundations and benefits of mindfulness are examined through short lectures. The relationship to personal and professional practice is cultivated in the context of helping professions. Assignments for home practice include a workbook, CD and written material.

Students are invited to get on board a journey of self-discovery, self-development & learning, to understand the essence of mindful-based practice, and to begin to build upon and enhance that which they already know.

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Maple Melder Crozier, Cindy Rammage and Christine Slavik

are faculty members in the Child and Youth Care degree program at the University of the Fraser Valley. Collectively they have 56 years post-secondary teaching experience. They share a passion for work with children, youth and families, and strive to bring this passion to the classroom, engaging with students to help them develop both personally and professionally, and positively contribute to their communities of practice. Together they contribute to pedagogy of trauma, expressive therapies and mindfulness-based practices.

Billy's Story: MOOCs, CYC and Storytelling

Graham McPheat

Abstract

Yuan and Powell (2013) describe Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) as a 'relatively recent online learning phenomenon' which has been developed for a mixture of philanthropic and business motives. The potential of MOOCs has prompted a number of universities to set up open learning platforms and provide courses online. In the UK, the Open University created Futurelearn, a partnership involving a number of leading UK universities, providing a number of open, online courses at no cost to learners (Futurelearn, 2012). The University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland, subsequently joined this partnership. This article outlines the process of developing Strathclyde's fourth MOOC, Caring for Vulnerable Children, its relationship with our MSc in Child and Youth Care Studies by distance learning and explores some of the challenges and opportunities in teaching child and youth care in a completely online environment.

From January 2014 onwards The University of Strathclyde developed and delivered three different MOOCs – Introduction to Forensic Science, Understanding Modern Business and Organisations and Introduction to Journalism. All were well received and popular, in particular Introduction to Forensic Science, which recruited more than 26,000 participants in its first run alone and garnered significant amounts of positive feedback from course learners. This MOOC has now run five times with a total of more than 52,000 registered participants.

When considering the development of a fourth MOOC, there was a strong desire to involve a different part of the University, in particular the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. This opportunity was presented to the staff team involved in developing and launching the MSc in Child and Youth Care Studies by distance learning and also involved working in partnership with the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in

Scotland (CELCIS). It was hoped that a high quality product could be developed which would make a contribution to both the philanthropic and business motives of many MOCC providers mentioned above. The philanthropic piece would be the creation of a free, open-to-access learning resource for all residential and child and youth care practitioners, and indeed other related professionals, which would contribute to the development of the field. However, a business angle also existed with the opportunity to use a free online, distance learning program to publicise the income generating online, distance learning MSc program.

Establishing this link in a meaningful manner presented one obvious challenge. Whilst the MSc is aimed at experienced practitioners with prior educational qualifications, MOOCs are open and accessible to all. Masters level study involves and requires engagement with material in an in-depth manner, engaging critically with theory and research. MOOCs by comparison offer the chance to present an introduction to subject matter but not necessarily the time or space to explore key concepts in significant depth. Consequently, there was a need for constant review and attempt to achieve a suitable balance in the material between talking to experienced practitioners alongside those who could conceivably be completely new or external to the field.

Initial tasks involved setting out the curriculum to be covered during what would be a 6-week course where the material would equate to 3-4 hours of participant work per week. The course was placed within a clear political context, stating that in times of austerity and shrinking public resources, the task of identifying and caring for vulnerable children has never been more challenging. Following this, six weekly themes were decided upon, these providing a more detailed shape and structure and shape for the course. The six themes were: Vulnerability and Risk; Attachment and Child Development; Communication; Key Characteristics of Practice; Responses to Vulnerable Children and Ways Forward in Caring for Vulnerable Children.

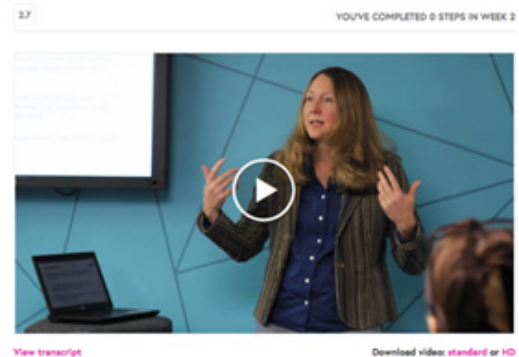
The next task involved creating the mixture of resources for each week. These included weekly video introductions, text based pages, video based inputs focussing on key curriculum themes, discussion pages, a weekly quiz designed to allow participants to measure their progress, and a series of polls which participants complete to promote and stimulate discussion.

The process of creating the video based inputs on key curriculum themes was a particularly interesting process. MOOCs, due to their free and voluntary nature, finish with far fewer fully participating learners than first register. Different sources cite figures between 7% (Parr, 2013) and 13% (Onah, Sinclair & Boyatt, 2014) as the average

completion rate for MOOCs – and perhaps the main challenge for all MOOC developers is how to keep learners as fully engaged as possible. Barriers to completion are significant (Kennedy, 2014) and there are not the regular drivers associated with fee paying and credit bearing courses.

In the case of Caring for Vulnerable Children, part of the strategy to tackle this issue involved keeping all items or pages to a manageable size and/or duration for learners. Text based pages had an upward limit of 500 words whilst all video based inputs had to fit to an '8-minute rule'. This presented an interesting challenge to those recording inputs on complex subjects such as containment and holding environments, attachment theory and care for children in a risk-averse environment. The challenge involved presenting a coherent introduction and/or overview in a relatively short window, especially when many were used to the luxury of far longer lecture slots on traditionally taught courses, whilst simultaneously speaking to the previously mentioned mixture of experienced practitioners alongside those completely new to the subject and the discipline.

Another significant task – a storytelling component – involved an element which had evolved as a key feature of the Strathclyde MOOCs developed prior to Caring for Vulnerable Children. The first MOOC developed by Strathclyde, An Introduction to Forensic Science, had incorporated a fictional video based story which formed part of the weekly learning materials. In the Forensic Science MOOC it took the form of a murder mystery where the events and issues featuring in the story each week mirrored the course content and curriculum. Upon review of the course feedback it was clear that participants enjoyed the storytelling element of this MOOC and in some cases they fed back



Containment and holding environments

205 comments

In the second presentation this week with Dr Laura Steckley, we are introduced to the concepts of containment and holding environments.

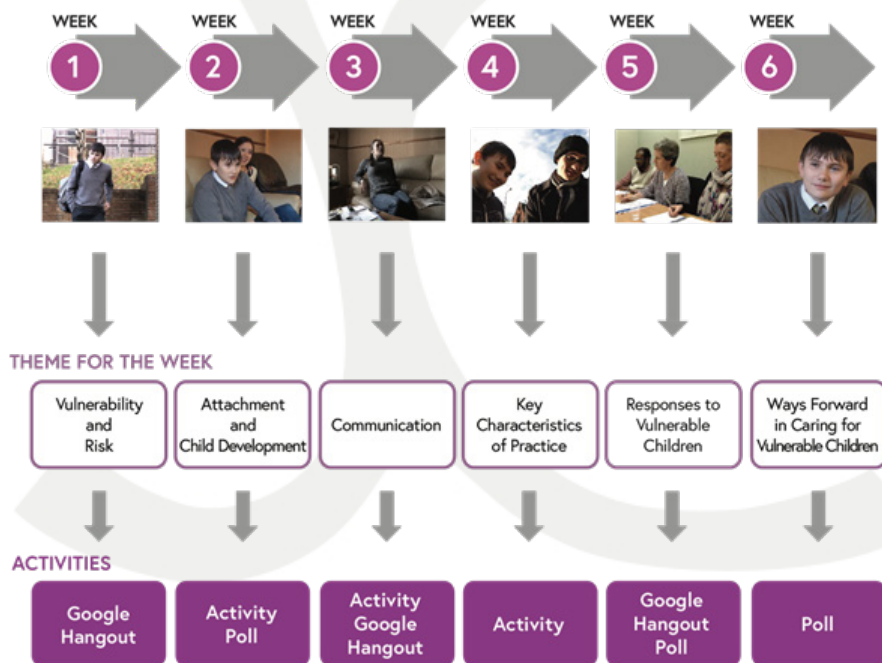
She starts by making clear that containment is not the same as constraint. Similarly, she highlights how holding environments can sometimes be inaccurately be confused with holding therapies.

that the story that weaved its way through the six weeks of the course was the hook that kept them coming back each week and encouraging them to complete the course, and at the same time contributing significantly to the challenge of boosting retention and completion rates.

Consequently, all Strathclyde MOOCs adopted this same storytelling technique. The task for this MOOC was to develop a storyline which complimented and contributed to the curriculum of Caring for Vulnerable Children. This subsequently took the form of “Billy’s Story” and became, arguably, the cornerstone and greatest asset of the entire course.

The task here moved beyond the traditional writing of academic course material and involved developing the broad storyline, from this creating a far more detailed storyboard to guide filming, scouting and securing locations and cast members and then the actual

The Case Study – ‘Billy’s Story’



shoot. The work involved in this whole process was considerable but was rewarded with hugely positive feedback from course participants as well as external recognition when the Billy's Story element of the course was the winner of a British Universities Film and Video Council Learning on Screen Award in April 2016.

Whilst post-course feedback didn't specifically measure the degree to which Billy's Story impacted on retention rates, comments posted on a weekly basis pointed towards it playing a significantly positive role. Many learners regularly commented on how worried or concerned they were about Billy and his family and were keen for the story to develop the next week to find out how he was getting on. Many of these comments evidenced the true effectiveness of the storytelling, as learners connected the story and the events being played out to the course curriculum.



In the week where child development and attachment were the focus, Billy's Story featured some of his early childhood experiences and family relationships. In the final week, when the story ended but clearly pointed towards ongoing challenges, this reflected the course material that week which encouraged learners to reflect on the challenges involved in continuing to provide on-going support and care in a climate of austerity and resource shortages. Whilst fictional, the issues explored were very real and Billy acted as a means by which learners could both think about how the course material



Course structure – telling the story

related to practice, as well as making links, where appropriate, to their own role and work setting.

Another learning tool employed was Google Hangouts – of which there were three. These provided a different strand of interaction for learners with potentially real-time interactions with course staff as opposed to asynchronous comments and posts in forums. Learners were invited to post questions to course members which would then be answered and responded to in a live session, which was also recorded and made available retrospectively via YouTube to participants who couldn't join in as it was broadcast.

These live sessions lasted 40 minutes each and feedback here was again very positive with many comments pointing towards an appreciation of being able to hear questions and talking points being explored in more depth. These sessions, perhaps more than any other component of the course, served to highlight the huge complexity involved in the task of caring for vulnerable children and the lack of concrete solutions and answers to deeply complex scenarios.

How effective was Caring for Vulnerable Children overall in achieving its aims, both philanthropic and business? The evidence would point towards success on both fronts. In terms of philanthropy and making something available to the child and youth care community, participation numbers indicate that the opportunities provided by Caring for Vulnerable Children have been seized upon. The first four runs of the course saw more than 40,000 learners enrol to join. Completion rates hover at around 30%, significantly above the industry average. Participant enrolment data reveals learners from more than 100 countries were represented, indicating a truly global reach. Learner profiles and comments indicate that many participants were residential workers, teachers, social

workers, Scottish Children's Panel members, foster carers and child and youth care workers all undertaking and completing the course for reasons of continuous professional development. Taken together, the evidence suggests that the course has been successful in providing a resource to the sector, particularly in Scotland.

However, these have not been the only successes. Perhaps the biggest achievement has been the consistently excellent sociability rating that the course records. Sociability refers to learners who are actively participating in the course on a week to week basis, posting comments and engaging in discussion and debate. The average figure for Futurelearn MOOCs is 38%. After the first four runs of Caring for Vulnerable Children, the sociability rating was standing at 59%, the highest ever recorded for a Futurelearn MOOC. This translated into 149,990 posted comments in the first four runs of the course. Whilst not the highest Futurelearn course in terms of registered participants, it has outstripped others in successfully encouraging learners to actively engage and participate in the learning process. The reasons behind this could be connected to a range of factors. Futurelearn themselves have regularly cited the techniques used in Caring for Vulnerable Children as an

6/15

YOU'VE COMPLETED 6 STEPS IN WEEK 6



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Discuss Billy's Story: 'Ongoing challenges'

Why not wait until you have seen the final video before adding your comments to this discussion?

When you have found out what happens in Billy's story you can come back to this step and comment on the decision taken by the Children's Hearing. You might also want to think about whether society and/or the state should do more to support families such as Billy's and what may prove helpful to Billy and his family as they move forward.

DISCUSSION

Everyone | Following | Most liked | Your comments



Alden Johnston

Leave a comment... (plain text only, links will be auto-linked)

Post

Max 1200 chars



I hope Billy's mum gets the support she needs to tackle her depression counselling, what causes her depression, additional financial support & better education. Once mum is sorted Billy can relax, he may even attend some of the sessions to meet others

Like 9

Follow 15 FEB



This is the question, the panel recommend the temporary placement for Billy do they also make recommendations for mum? It would have been nice to see her GP or Community Mental Health Nurse at the hearing so that they could have had some input, I would like to think there would be some inter agency working on trying to organise Billy's temporary placement with some increased therapy/day hospital care/psychiatric review for Karen. It would seem a shame to not utilise this time positively for them both.

Like 4

Follow 19 FEB



That's a good point Natalie, having the GP there would show that mum is getting the help she needs to deal with her mental health which in turn would help Billy.

Like 1

Follow 19 FEB

Reply



I am glad to see that the panel decided not to remove Billy from his home but is there no way of making his mother stepping into a kind of contract binding her to take more and specific measures to work on her own situation, her own mental health issues. Sometimes it needs pressure and a kind of wake up call to move people out of their passive miserable yet comforting zone of depression. I am not condescending here, I am speaking from experience.

Like 1

Follow 19 FEB

excellent example of how to set-up and stimulate discussion, so course design would appear to be part of it.

The participation of so many professionals from the field for the formal purpose of continuous professional development is also a likely factor and perhaps hints at a clear role and purpose for MOOCs as they move forward. CELCIS clearly see this a potential future strategy and are currently involved in developing a MOOC based around *Moving Forward: Implementing the 'Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children'* (Cantwell, 2012).

A clear business objective associated with Caring for Vulnerable Children was the link to the MSc in Child and Youth Care Studies. It was felt that there was the potential for the MOOC to enhance recruitment on the MSc, especially given that both are entirely online and delivered via distance learning, and both have the same lead educator. This objective can again be seen to have been successfully achieved with a number of students progressing from Caring for Vulnerable Children to the MSc in 2015 and 2016.

The experience of creating and delivering Caring for Vulnerable Children has also been highly instructive with regards to the future development of the MSc. Delivering child and youth care in an online distance learning environment holds certain challenges, most specifically the task of dealing with a subject which, at its core, is relational. Caring for Vulnerable Children has and continues to help inform the manner in which the MSc is shaped and delivered, most specifically the task of achieving high levels of socialisation and learner interactions. As Higher Education continues to engage increasingly with online technology and different delivery models, this is a challenge that those involved in education and training in the child and youth care sector will have to respond to. Some of the lessons learned from the development of Caring for Vulnerable Children and Billy's Story can help to inform this process.

Caring for Vulnerable Children is free to access and will be running for a fifth time starting on Monday 24th October 2016. It can be registered for in advance at <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/vulnerable-children>

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Graham McPheat

is Senior Teaching Fellow based in the School of Social Work and Social Policy at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, Scotland where he is Lead Social Work Professional and Course Leader on the MSc in Child and Youth Care Studies by Distance Learning. He wrote and is the lead educator on Caring for Vulnerable Children. He also teaches on the BA (Hons) Social Work and the MSc in Advanced Residential Child Care programmes. He has worked in the University since 2013 and before this was a practitioner and manager in residential child care.



Taking Chances

Christopher Tone

Keywords

relationships, peer support, self-reflection, students, CYC

My name is Christopher Tone, and I have just graduated from Ryerson University's (BA) Child and Youth Care (CYC) program. Prior to entering Ryerson as a direct-entry student, I completed a 3-year diploma in Child and Youth Work (CYW) at George Brown College in Toronto. The next leg of my journey is in the Masters CYC program which has been newly created at Ryerson for the Fall 2016 semester. I was lucky enough to be selected as part of the very small group of around 20 guinea pigs (I mean students) to be part of the first cohort. I currently work in the residential and day treatment sectors, and have done so for the past four years. The purpose of this paper will be to chronicle my journey through college and university and speak on the various experiences, insights, and (hopefully) some important revelations around life as a CYC practitioner and student.

Like many journeys, mine began with a high degree of uncertainty and anxiety. After struggling my way through high school and subsequently taking a year off with no clear direction, I was lucky enough to begin volunteering and eventually secure a position as an Educational Assistant (EA) with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). For someone who had very little confidence in himself in a professional, personal, and social context, this seemed absolutely amazing! Someone had put their faith in this awkward kid to assist in the care of young people in need? Not too many years before this, I was one of those kids who needed a CYC in the classroom to manage my defiant behaviour. Looking back on that time (which was about 12 years ago), it seemed surprising that someone would put their trust in me to do this enormously important job. As CYC practitioners understand, a little bit of faith and trust can blossom into a great deal of confidence and success in the future. It was a higher level of expectation than I was used to, but I would eventually rise to meet the challenge. It was during this time that I began to expand my focus outward and become more attuned to the needs and emotions of others. Indeed, I began to utilize core CYC principles without realizing that I was doing so. I would only

come to discover this fact when I began my first serious foray into post-secondary education in the CYW program at George Brown College.

At a certain point during my time as an EA, I realized that I needed to do more, and to do it better than my skill set allowed. I decided to leave my post as an EA and go to school full time to become a CYW. Not only did I have first-hand experiences with CYWs as a youth, but I had worked alongside CYWs on the school board for a handful of years and saw the exceptional work they accomplished with the young people they worked with. It was inspiring to see just how much of a difference can be made in the life of a young person when they have someone who is not only properly trained but genuinely cares for their well-being and future. Thus began the next six years of my life in education; college for three years, bachelor's degree for two years, and now the upcoming master's degree.

For someone who very nearly failed out of high school, it came as a surprise that I actually enjoyed being in the classroom as well as out in the field and was excelling in the work I was doing. My time at George Brown was a truly positive experience and it was there that I made some of my most important connections and friendships to date: the restorative justice professor who showed up the first day of class in a gorilla costume, and the professors who spoke the raw non-sugar-coated truth about the field to the classmates I still call friends and colleagues today. As I transitioned out of college and into university, I was lucky enough to have some of those close friends come along for the journey.

The transition from my college experience to degree student began with the challenge of navigating through an exceedingly complicated registration and class registration process. Although when I completed my diploma I felt euphoric and accomplished, when September arrived and was about to begin degree studies I once again had that anxious feeling. Graduates from the degree program who shared their experience with me had made it clear that getting through this program would be no easy task – and they were correct! But as with my diploma experience, my success in the degree program was largely due to relationships - my friends, student colleagues, faculty and supports both inside and outside of Ryerson were a big reason why I was successful. During my time as a degree student there were many ups and downs. It was as important to learn from the 'downs' as to savour the 'ups'. Taking this learning with me as I look forward to beginning graduate CYC studies, I have pledged to procrastinate less and to be organized more. We shall see how that goes! (A word of advice to CYC students everywhere: do not put off your Independent Study paper!). As the fall approaches, I find I am reflecting on my diploma and undergraduate experiences as a way to quell that funny familiar feeling of

anxiety associated with beginning a new CYC academic year. I truly believe that my saving grace will again be relationships and my connections with classmates, faculty and our shared passion for CYC.

Clearly what I have learned from both my CYC diploma and undergraduate degree studies is the importance of relationships. This should not be a surprise as it is impossible to talk about CYC without mentioning relational practice, but academic institutions are of course different than CYC relational practice settings. It can be a challenge to create, foster, mentor, or maintain relationships with student peers and professors. However, as relationships are the cornerstone on which CYC practice is built, CYC students need to know how to navigate relationships in order to facilitate best outcomes for young people. And so the approach to CYC education should perhaps be different than the approach to teaching business or physics for example. My own CYC educational experience reinforces this observation. I believe much of my success, hard work notwithstanding, was due to the impact of positive peer supports (i.e., likeminded friends). There are many studies and articles on the effects of negative peer contagion, but positive peer contagion works similarly. I now wonder if it was through chance, or program design that I was able to find myself surrounded by friends who were not only extremely intelligent and accomplished but who were – and are – genuinely authentic and supportive. Taking risks and learning new material becomes ‘doable’ when one feels supported. The outcome for me was that I felt inspired to push my limits and work toward becoming a better person, student, and CYC practitioner.

I always find it unfortunate when I talk with classmates who have little to no interaction with professors or program directors. CYC faculty can offer so much beyond their classroom content. They often have decades of CYC experience and have worked hard to apply this experience to teaching, research and the development of the CYC profession. And they are relational! It is important that as CYC students we learn ‘how to be’ in a variety of relationships. Certainly there are boundaries we need to define, but it is important that as CYC students we appreciate the ‘human nature’ of our professors. In my experience, CYC faculty are sincerely nice friendly people who are happy to engage with students and provide support when and as needed. In my opinion, fostering positive relationships between students and faculty, and faculty and students, is itself the cornerstone of CYC education. It would be foolish and a loss if students and faculty did not draw on each other’s knowledge and experience while they are working together. When students seek out relationships with professors, and professors reach out to foster working relationships with students we not only demonstrate our mutual commitment to

the field, but we are also finding ways to be congruent with the ethos of CYC practice. We are learning relationally. In turn, this can open up doors for both personal and professional growth and opportunity.

The concept of relational learning need not be limited to one on one or interpersonal relationships within a program or institution. My own college and university CYC experience has introduced me to the relationship possibilities within a much larger community. I have become aware of a larger, international and connected CYC community of which I am a member. It is comforting to know that countries all around the world are utilizing the same core principles (although adapted to their particular context) that are used in Canada. It was not until I began studying at Ryerson that I truly discovered this aspect of CYC practice. Perhaps it was through my degree studies experience that I also learned ways to connect to this larger community; just how easy it is to reach out to other practitioners for advice and information. This community includes individuals, authors, practitioners, and resources such as CYC-Net and podcasts like C2Y. Being part of and participating in these larger communities enables CYC students to expand our perspective, acquire various cultural lenses, deepen our knowledge-base, and add to our youth care toolboxes – enabling us as graduates to be better prepared when we enter practice. Again my reflection is that these resources are themselves another relational element. As students we can simply passively acquire and ‘soak up’ the learning from this larger community, or we can be relational. We can take a deep breath and step into these communities actively finding opportunities to interact with the prolific writers and practitioners of our field in person. As with my observations about CYC teaching faculty, it has been my experience that the broader CYC practice and writing community is open, friendly and very eager to collaborate with emerging practitioners and CYC students.

I had the opportunity this past May to attend (with peers and faculty from Ryerson) the OACYC conference in Thunder Bay, and the Canadian CYC national conference in Halifax. Both of these conferences were transformative experiences, and truly expanded my concept of identity as a CYC practitioner. Although these experiences can be costly and stretch the student budget, there are often limited funding opportunities available through faculties in some schools to attend or present at these events, so make it known that you are interested! To sit in a room and not only listen to, but to be able to speak with the great minds of our field – people such as Kiaras Gharabaghi, Jack Phelan, Thom Garfat, and Carol Stuart, is enlightening, and inspiring. For me these experiences were also affirming. I had the honour of presenting at both of these conferences. Receiving

positive feedback, and being invited to continue to participate was like a welcome mat. I now feel connected and genuinely part of the larger professional community. Certainly these contacts will be helpful to my graduate studies, but more importantly as I approach the new fall semester I feel strong in my quest to become the best CYC I can be.

It is interesting then to review that when I began this article, I started off by saying that my journey began with uncertainty and anxiety. Although these feelings have not completely gone away as I move forward professionally and academically, I do feel different than when I began my CYC diploma so many years ago. Although I know myself well enough to know I will never completely eliminate the anxieties I associate with new beginnings and academia, I have learned it is certainly possible to manage them and make them work for you. I suggest that I learned this through relational experiences during my diploma and degree studies. I am now more self aware, able to build relationships and networks, more willing to ask for and use feedback, and more willing to take risks – knowing that I will be supported.

I recall that as I approached the end of the CYW diploma program at George Brown, I was hesitant even to consider continuing with a further two years' full time studies in the Ryerson CYC degree program. But I also recall the important role that friends, student colleagues and professors had on me as they encouraged and applied some light pressure to press on and go for it. I now realize it did not take much prodding! It is interesting that the process of applying to become a CYC graduate student was different but not dissimilar. I reached out for feedback and support; perhaps for affirmation. I knew how to do this, and had a network in place upon which I could rely for authentic feedback. When did I learn these skills? I believe I can thank my CYC diploma and CYC degree experiences for this essential learning. Of course, there is still some lingering anxiety and uncertainty about graduate school but I know I have the skills and the supports to be successful.

In the writing of this article, I am struck by the importance of context in CYC education. Being aware of and knowing how to examine context is such a huge part of CYC practice. It permeates every aspect of the work we do with young people; it is used to inform our interactions and interventions. I realize that another essential aspect of CYC education is the creation of opportunities for students to struggle with developing and often competing sets of values and beliefs. This is an important developmental exercise for any person, but it is particularly important for someone who aspires to work with underserved young people in multicultural settings. Although my educational experience other than CYC programs is limited, I am confident that there is more contextual learning,

personal challenge and moral development required by the CYC curriculum. I am now much more aware that my own values and beliefs have been, and will continue to be, influenced by my past context, which in turn influences my present and future context. Although a large part of studying at a university in non-CYC programs may be challenging students to think critically, I believe that one of the core characteristics of CYC education is or should be the opportunity for students to continually examine, test, and reflect on their own beliefs, values, and biases. CYC education is about personal growth as much as it is about skills and course content.

I am also aware that students enter CYC education from a variety of backgrounds, and with a variety of points of view. My particular background stems from a very practical place. Having worked in the field prior to entering college, and then obtaining practical hands-on learning at the diploma level gave me a different perspective than a student who chooses to enter a full four-year CYC degree program straight out of high school. This is not to say that one perspective is better than another, although there seems to be a friendly rivalry between direct-entry and four-year students! I realize now that both points of view actually helped to inform the other. I was able to learn from students who had more academic experience than myself and I believe I was able to challenge some of my student colleagues, who without my experience seemed to be hampered by very idealistic expectations about CYC practice. What I needed to learn was how to apply theory to my practice. What I was able to offer to other students was how to use practice wisdom to challenge CYC theory. I believe that CYC educational models that integrate students from a variety of backgrounds and orientations to practice are able to better prepare graduates for the realities of practice.

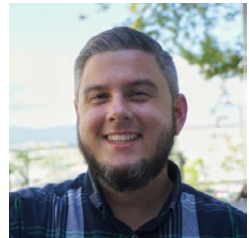
However, it takes balance. Relationships, personal growth, reflection, critical thinking and applied learning are difficult tasks. During my own educational journey, I often struggled to maintain a balanced life. I often devoted too much time to work/school and not enough time to being with friends and family or engaging in self-care. Conversely, I frequently swung to the other end of the spectrum, spending too much time enjoying myself and, neglecting studies. And as a student I needed financial security so like many CYC students I searched for work related to the field. I often found it difficult to find balance. Although we learned about burn out and self care in class, this was not always practiced in the program. As a student, I struggled to maintain a regular schedule at work. Often it was too overwhelming to be doing both at the same time. There was little flexibility in school deadlines, and too few opportunities to use my work experience as an alternative venue for academic learning. I often ended up pulling back from my work

schedule somewhat and focusing on my studies, since I believed I did not have enough time to complete all of my assignments if I was working many shifts a week. I wonder if there is more here for me to learn about workload management. At the same time, I wonder how CYC curriculum and academic demands could do more to support real student learning in this regard. Teaching about self care is not the same as practicing self care.

As I close this article I realize it has become as much a tale of my CYC educational journey as it is a personal reflection. This makes me smile. As in any 'helping profession' it is important that CYC practitioners (both students and workers) practice introspection and critical reflection on past and present experiences. To gain insight and make meaning of these experiences is an integral step to deeper self awareness. The opportunity to share my CYC educational experience has enabled me to step back and better understand how and why I am where I am today. I realize that as I look to the challenges of graduate school, my CYC undergraduate education has provided me the opportunity to learn and to practice meaning making. Interesting – as this is, I believe, the essence of our profession. I look forward to my continuing journey.

Christopher Tone

is a recent BACYC graduate and is currently enrolled in the Master of Arts in Child and Youth Care program at Ryerson University. He has worked with young people in varying settings in Ontario, Canada, for twelve years. He currently works in residential and day treatment programs for youth with mental health and emotional difficulties. As he continues his journey in the field of child and youth care and through life, Christopher continues to apply a critical lens to his own past and present experiences and to the policies and procedures that affect the young people we serve.



Exploring Child and Youth Care Internships

Rozlyn Oates

Keywords

Child and Youth Care students, burnout, self-care, field placement, trauma

Abstract

Exploring Child and Youth Care (CYC) internships, is a quantitative study from a senior level thesis project. It examines the levels of compassion, burnout and secondary traumatic stress compared to composites of self-care and support in child and youth care students on internship, in the hopes to learn more about the relationship between the variables and the implications for supporting CYC students in internship. Literature surrounding student internships has been explored for “helping” professionals; along with the constructivist model of understanding vicarious trauma and some factors students encounter to mitigate the stress like supervision, self-care and reflection. From the literature a survey was created and administered to test the research questions. The data was evaluated using SPSS and a linear regression to better understand the variables' relationship. Following the findings is a discussion as to the implications for practice and future research.

An Exploration of Students in Placement and Vicarious Trauma

Students who are in the field of CYC engage in placements throughout their experience as a prerequisite for graduation. As helping professionals who work in a variety of settings they may work with people who have undergone life events that can be viewed as traumatic. As helping professionals there is an increased susceptibility that students will experience vicarious trauma. Secondary traumatic stress is conceptualized along with compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma as the phenomenon that occurs when intervening in the lives and caring for people who have experienced trauma; this phenomenon has implications on the psychological, emotional and cognitive effects from

the exposure of simply listening to the traumatized person's stories (Bercier & Maynard, 2015). Because of this increased risk it is important to consider what factors may affect students engaged in CYC settings as required placement learning.

Background

Vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, secondary stress and secondary traumatic stress are phenomena that occur for people who interact with others in a helping role. Those helpers are people who work and are educated about the subject of trauma as well as students in helping professions on placement. There is great importance in understanding that trauma is pervasive to people's lives daily and can enter people's lives individually or via the media (O'Halloran & O'Halloran, 2001). So there is then importance in understanding protective factors of how helpers manage and cope with stress and trauma. Starting with an understanding of how vicarious trauma is constructed in the framework of the constructivist model, the experience of students is then applied with specific regards to seeing the risk of secondary traumatic stress, along with mitigating factors such as supervision, self-care and reflection. Throughout the literature, secondary stress, secondary traumatic stress and vicarious trauma are used synonymously, whereas compassion fatigue is occasionally used as an independent concept and also synonymously to the previous terms (Jordan, 2010). Agreement is noted throughout the literature that burnout occurs over a prolonged period of time (Harr & Moore, 2011). The terms of placement, internship and field work will be used synonymously throughout this study.

Theoretical Model

The constructivist model theorizes the phenomenological effects of trauma and stress occurring vicariously to the care giver. Using a strengths approach enables an understanding of this model in action framing how the "helper" may view the trauma as both negative and positive to their life and sense of self. This theory states that "all individuals possess cognitive schema that reflect beliefs and expectations about the self, others and the world in which we live; fundamental schemas develop as a result of our socialization process and serve to assist us in organizing and interpreting our subsequent experiences" (Kadambi & Ennis, 2004). If there is a challenge to the earlier established schema there is a process of either accommodation or assimilation of the new change, or schematic reconstruction allows for development in the self as well as a heightened awareness of the experience or concept that impacted the schema. According to this

framework, schemas can be altered positively, negatively or neutrally thus suggesting that stress and trauma can and do change the way one thinks, views the world and one's self in it. With this understanding it is conceivable that the effects of stress on students in field placements may be understood as placing those students at risk.

Increased Stress

In a study conducted with clinical psychology students working on field placements, Adams & Riggs noted significantly greater stress responses among practicum and internship trainees compared to more experienced professional staff due to a lack of knowledge of trauma (2008). This is echoed by Schwartz (2003), who notes that both students and novice practitioners placed into intense work situations early in their careers were forced to develop coping strategies. Schwartz further notes that although the field of social work is varied, no one setting is isolated from trauma.

Supervision

Related literature suggests that because students alter their schemas as a way to mitigate vicarious trauma it is essential that they engage with their supervisors as a way to cope with these alterations. Litvack, Bogo & Mishna (2010) considered who students reached out to during emotionally charged events in field placements. Frequently this would be peers, parents and partners if there was not a strong relationship with their field supervisor. In a different study conducted by Davidson, the role of supervisor and student relationship from graduate social work students found that: "greater supervisees self-disclosure [was] related to greater learning opportunities and increased satisfaction of supervision, understanding the role of the supervisor in the learning dyad also may allow educators to develop useful interventions with potential of improving students field learning experienced" (Davidson, 2011). These results suggest that supervisor self-disclosure is a tool that can be used to positively impact students in a way to both normalize anxieties of students and positively impact the relationship between the student and the supervisor. This can act as a protective and mitigating factor in negatively altering schemas.

Coping and Self-Care

The literature is keen to note positive and negative coping methods in response to exposure to vicarious trauma. A study was conducted examining speech pathology interns who were observed: "seeking emotional social support, active coping, planning, positive

reinterpretation and growth” as coping strategies in response to vicarious trauma (Lincoln, Adamson & Covic, 2004). Student’s coping strategies were also seen to be connected to self-care. Baird (2014) defines self-care as how students and professionals assist in sustaining their careers and dealing with the stress of the work place. Self-care encompasses emotional, physical, and psychological health, when an individual holistically considers living in their environment. Baird notes that self-reflection is a way to help facilitate the process of self-care, in order to cope with the stresses and demands of the work place.

Reflection

Reflection is an element interconnected to self-care. It is frequently used as a tool to gain insight about student placement in addition to being a tool used for student personal use. For instance, Lam, Wong, and Leung (2007) examined the placement reflection logs of social work students’ in areas affected by the SARS outbreak to determine how students perceived endangerment. Student placement log entries were in the form of autobiographical reflections. Negative emotions were prevalent in many of these entries but on examination it became evident that when students struggled through a difficult event, the opportunity to reflect assisted them to find meaning in their experience and this in turn could be turned into learning and applied into a best practice. This recognition of negative emotions in reflections could demonstrate potential negative changes to students’ schemas; which is a connection to the theoretical understanding of vicarious trauma. A criticism of reflection as a coping strategy was to note that reflective learning can be limited if it remains self-focused. It is suggested that when students become too self-focused they fail to understand the world around them and the clients with whom they engage. This study sought to examine perceived student emotion and neglected to ask students if their feelings of endangerment affected their efficacy; as students were already using reflection to understand feelings they may not have questioned the impact of the reflection on their professional efficacy.

In summary the literature considered suggests the impact of vicarious trauma in placement can be reduced by engaging in supervision, utilizing self-care, becoming more knowledgeable about trauma and reflecting on one’s practice. Further it is relevant to note that not all trauma experiences are polarized to positive and negative (Bell, 2003). It must be noted that none of the literature reviewed was specific to the CYC field placement experience, nor was it specific to CYC education. The lack of literature specific to CYC education and the field work experience remains not only a limitation to this study,

but also a limitation of significance to CYC education, and research related to this endeavour.

Methods

A survey of 44 (N = 44; mean age = 24; range 19-47 years; 80% female, 18% male and 2% other) first, second and third year students in the CYC Diploma Program at Humber College in Toronto Canada was undertaken during the Winter semester of 2016. The survey design relied heavily on the work of Stamm (2009) which is a validated survey that looks at a worker's experience of compassion, burn out and secondary traumatic stress. Survey results were understood from the perspective of the interactionalist model used in the understanding of vicarious trauma/secondary traumatic stress.

All students completed the survey as they were completing one of their internships. The participation of students, and the survey instrument were approved by the Humber College Research Ethics Board.

Measures

Six variables were measured using the survey tool. Three of these – compassion, secondary traumatic stress and burnout – were measured using PRO QL scale (Stamm, 2009) while the remaining three – support use, support significance and self care used measures designed specifically for this research.

Compassion

10 items were averaged; an example of an item is “I get satisfaction from being able to help people.” (Stamm, 2009). Responses were on a five-point scale: 1 (Never), 2 (Rarely), 3 (Sometimes), 4 (Often), 5 (Very Often). Responses were averaged into a composite. The reliability was acceptable $\alpha = .81$.

Secondary Traumatic Stress

10 items were averaged; an example of an item is “I am preoccupied with more than one person I help.” (Stamm, 2009). Responses were on a five-point scale: 1 (Never), 2 (Rarely), 3 (Sometimes), 4 (Often), 5 (Very Often). Responses were averaged into a composite. The reliability was acceptable $\alpha = .72$.

Burnout

10 items were averaged; an example of an item is “I am happy.” (Stamm, 2009). Half of the response were on a 5 point scale: 1 (Never), 2 (Rarely), 3 (Sometimes), 4 (Often), 5 (Very Often); the other half were organized on a reverse 5 point scale: 1 (Very Often), 2 (Often), 3 (Sometimes), 4 (Rarely), 5 (Never).

Support Use

The measure included both scaled questions as well as open ended questions. 12 items of the close ended questions were asked on a 5 point scale: 1 (Never), 2 (Rarely/ Monthly), 3 (Sometimes/ Weekly), 4 (Frequently), 5 (Consistently/ Daily). Students were asked to rank how much they used each support, which included: Seminar Instructor, Seminar Group, Professor(s), Internship Supervisor, Co-worker(s) at Internship, Students in your program, Friends outside of your program, Family and Partners, Reflective Journaling, Self-Care, and Other. The results were organized into a composite and the reliability was $\alpha=.81$ which is an acceptable level.

Support Significance

The measure for support use was developed specifically for this research and included both scaled questions as well as open ended questions. 12 items of the close ended questions were asked on a 5 point scale: 1 (Never), 2 (Rarely/ Monthly), 3 (Sometimes/ Weekly), 4 (Frequently), 5 (Consistently/ Daily). Students were asked to rank how much they used each support, which included: Seminar Instructor, Seminar Group, Professor(s), Internship Supervisor, Co-worker(s) at Internship, Students in your program, Friends outside of your program, Family and Partners, Reflective Journaling, Self-Care, and Other. The results were organized into a composite and the reliability was $\alpha=.90$ which is high.

Self Care while in Field Placement

The measure included both a scaled question as well as open ended question. Both in and out of internship this was a single question asked on a 6 point scale: 1 (Never), 2 (Yearly), 3 (Monthly), 4 (Weekly), 5 (Daily), 6 (Hourly), which asked participants to select the approximate frequency at which they conducted their self-care. The two questions were combined to conduct the reliability which was low at $\alpha=.63$.

Self Care while not in Field Placement

This measure included both a scaled question as well as open ended question. Both in and out of internship this was a single question asked on a 6-point scale: 1 (Never), 2 (Yearly), 3 (Monthly), 4 (Weekly), 5 (Daily), 6 (Hourly), which asked participants to select the approximant frequency at which they conducted their self-care. The two questions were combined to conduct the reliability which was low at $\alpha=.63$.

Analysis

All analysis was completed using IMB SPSS23, testing the hypothesis that experience, self-care, and support are negatively correlated to secondary traumatic stress, as well as to burnout. The criterion variables were secondary traumatic stress and burnout in the hopes of completing two multiple hierarchical regressions. In step one the control variables of age, gender and experience were taken into consideration, in the second step the variables of self-care both in and out of internship and support use were considered.

Results

Table 1 includes descriptive information and correlations of the variables.

| Variable | M | SD | α | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|--------------------------------|------|------|----------|-------|-------|-------|------|-----|--------|
| 1. Compassion | 4.15 | .51 | .81 | - | | | | | |
| 2. Secondary Traumatic Stress | 2.04 | .47 | .72 | .02 | - | | | | |
| 3. Burnout | 2.98 | .43 | .69 | -.55* | .43** | - | | | |
| 4. Support Use | 3.25 | .72 | .81 | .15 | -.13 | -.31* | - | | |
| 5. Support Significance | 3.60 | .99 | .90 | .28 | .11 | -.21 | .55 | - | |
| 6. Self Care in Internship | 4.07 | 1.11 | .63 | .15 | -.02 | -.38* | .29 | .17 | - |
| 7. Self Care Out of Internship | 4.32 | 1.04 | .63 | .021 | -.36* | -.15 | .37* | .06 | .460** |

*Significance of $p \leq .05$ represented with **

*Significance of $p \leq .01$ represented with ***

As presented in Table 1, compassion was positively correlated to self-care both in and out of internship, as well as support significance and support use, though the correlations were not considered significant. Compassion was also positively correlated to secondary

traumatic stress, though again not at a significant level. This suggests compassion could be a motivator to continue work in the field which could continue to place an individual at risk for potential secondary traumatic stress. Compassion was negatively correlated only with burnout and there was significance to this relationship.

Secondary traumatic stress was positively correlated with compassion to burnout at a significant amount which suggests the relationship between the two variables is significant. The only significant negative correlation found was between secondary traumatic stress and self-care out of internship.

Burnout was negatively correlated to support use and self-care in internship at significant levels.

Support use was positively correlated to support significance and self-care in internship, although not at a high level of significance. However, it was also positively correlated to self-care out of internship at a significant level.

Support significance was not significantly correlated to self-care.

Self-care in internship was, however, positively correlated to self-care out of internship at a significant level. This suggests that there is a relationship between the practices of self-care when in and out of placement.

Regression

A lack of correlation between the variables resulted in a decision to run only a single regression with the criterion variable of burnout and support use and self-care in internship.

The significance of each variable was .33 for support use and .04 for self-care in internship. Of the linear regression the adjusted R squared was .12, interpreted as 12% of the regression was due to the two variables together.

Interpretation

The correlations demonstrate a negative relationship between compassion and burnout, implying that increased compassion decreases the risk of burning out in the field. This is congruent with the constructivist model of understanding vicarious trauma suggesting that a “positive” experience can translate into less perceived instances of secondary stress and burnout in the work/internship setting (Kadambi & Ennis, 2004; Cohen & Collens, 2013).

An unexpected correlation was the positive correlation between burnout and secondary traumatic stress. This seems incongruent as within the literature these two

concepts are marked as distinctly different (Harr & Moore, 2011). Responses to this inquiry however, demonstrated a strong correlation which may be due to variables specific to the institution, the semester, the program field work model, the nature of placement experiences, models of supervision, preparation for field placement or simply the small size of the study sample.

The final variable that demonstrated numerous correlations was self-care out of internship. This appears to be related to using supports and self-care in placement, and inversely related to burnout, suggesting that when self-care is practiced outside of internship it may lower risks associated with burnout. Baird (2014) supports this finding suggesting that CYC educational programs should consider external supports in their field work models and preparation for field practice. This factor seems to have been largely ignored in CYC field work research, and in CYC educational pedagogy suggesting it may prove useful in future investigations into either CYC fieldwork, or self-care and support models for CYC students.

A linear regression was adapted to look at the relationship between self-care in internship, support use and the amount of burnout. The equation demonstrated that self-care and support use lowered the experiences of burnout. This predicts that as these two variables increase a burnout in this population would decrease. Of course the limitations of this study are significant, implying that there may be unknown factors impacting on burnout.

Discussion

This limited sample and inquiry was congruent with literature suggesting support and self-care are protective factors against burnout. A relationship between self-care and compassion was also found, suggesting that these factors support the role of the helper. Applying a constructivist model would assume that compassion would increase over the time of the student's internship. Thus the positive correlation between compassion and self-care implies that compassion may be a factor in the creation of a positive schema after encountering trauma or stress in a field work setting.

This research suggests that support and self-care do indeed protect helpers in the field. However, this study was focused on the impact of secondary traumatic stress and vicarious trauma. The related literature in this regard did not stipulate or specify the effects of burnout from early career exposure; nor was there literature available specific to CYC professional practice, or CYC field work practice. It is open therefore to explore the

nature of early career exposure to secondary trauma and early practice experiences specific to CYC relational practices.

Implications

The findings in this study suggest the field work experiences of CYC students to be related to secondary and vicarious trauma. The findings suggest it may be important to focus on not only the teaching of, but also the practice of, self-care by students, and their engagement not only with CYC supervisors but also with family and peers external to the field work experience. Further investigations into CYC educational practices should consider the diversity of self-care within the diversity of student experiences. Research into CYC education needs also to pay attention to field work models and supervisory practices that limit the availability of supervision to online, telephone or once a week face-to-face encounters. These seem insufficient given the nature of the correlations suggested in this study.

It is further suggested that the link between CYC field work and professional practice be explored. It seems obvious to suggest there is a relationship between early pre-professional experiences with exposure to secondary trauma, and future experiences within professional practice. It would seem logical that CYC educators, agencies employing CYC practitioners, practitioners, and CYC professional associations collaborate on further research investigating current and best practices related to exposure and responses to vicarious trauma. What is experienced early in the education of a CYC practitioner may well prove to be a protective factor, not only to the wellbeing of CYC practitioners as individuals, but also to the longevity of their careers; this may be a link in addressing the issues of relationship permanency in the field, which may prove to be protective to young people in care.

This research also suggests various factors may be worthy of future focus in terms of correlation. Specifically, the variable of compassion seems worthy of future study. Of course future studies should involve larger sample sizes, and follow up with respondents' pre and post field work in order to examine a growth and potential change in response over the time they are in internships. Such a study would be interesting to correlate with the learning outcomes associated with novice, intermediate and advance field work semesters.

Limitations

The major limitation in the current study was a small sample size. It remains unclear if non-significant findings were noteworthy or whether they were due to a small sample. A larger sample size and the administration of a survey tool across various semesters and within various CYC programs across Canada may certainly reveal different correlations and significant factors. The sample size of this study renders the results ungeneralizable, and the use of a cross-sectional approach provides a snap shot of information specific to this time and place. This study does not evaluate how responses may change over time or with additional experience or learning in subsequent academic semesters. One wonders if there might be a significant difference in responses between first and third internship students. A mixed methodology approach might also provide a richer understanding as to the perceptions of students. Further studies may also consider the development of investigative tools that are specific to CYC, and not dependent on those developed for allied professions. Further – future studies should consider the student's understanding and conception of terms such as self-care, burnout and supervision. These terms may well differ as a factor of age, culture, educational experience, language or ethnicity. This would align future research more closely with CYC practice and ensure relational congruence.

Conclusion

This study found that from a small sample of CYC students located in Toronto, self-care in internship and support use were associated with the experience of burnout. This supports literature reviewed in fields allied to other helping professions. It explains the usefulness of support and self-care practices by students and professionals working alongside people who may have experienced trauma. This research has led to further questions surrounding the relationships between secondary traumatic stress and burnout. It also asks questions about CYC education in general and field work practice in particular. These questions include inquiries into the impact of field work models on student burnout, the preparation for field work as adequate to the potential for vicarious trauma, the relationship between models and access to supervision and risk of burnout, and the ability of CYC educational programs to respect and collaborate with various family and community forms of self-care relevant to the student context.

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Rozlyn Oates

is a recent graduate of Humber's Bachelor of Child and Youth Care. This article is an adaptation of her final thesis project



Ways of Knowing: A Discussion of Research Mindedness in Child and Youth Care Education

Heather Snell

The images accompanying this article are some of those created in winter 2016 as part of the Bachelor of Child and Youth Care (BCYC) program at Humber College. I hope these images will serve not only to celebrate student work, but also to trigger a few questions about how we as educators approach research mindedness in Child and Youth Care (CYC) education.

First some context: In the province of Ontario, Canada there are 45 college or university programs leading to either a degree or diploma in CYC. The majority of these are three-year diploma programs which focus on preparing students for entry positions as CYC practitioners. The diploma programs are well established – some of them have been graduating CYC practitioners for more than 40 years. The ‘new kids on the block’ are the CYC degree programs in Ontario. What are the differences between a three-year diploma and a four year degree – aside from the obvious extra year of study? Often CYC diploma graduates complete more field work hours than degree graduates, diploma courses tend to be more applied and less theoretical than degree courses, and degree students must complete more liberal arts courses, including one or more research methods courses, and undertake a senior thesis project. In Canada entry to graduate school requires the completion of a four-year degree, research methods courses and the completion of an undergraduate thesis.

So it was a cause for celebration in 2011 when Humber College opened its doors to students beginning a new BCYC degree. It was exciting to be part of a new pathway in CYC education – one that could lead program graduates to graduate school, which should logically lead to more CYC informed research. This is where the journey of this article began. While completing a sabbatical at the University of Strathclyde, I investigated CYC undergraduate research and thesis courses. I looked at CYC thesis course outlines,



learning outcomes and student work. I wanted to know if CYC thesis courses were unique and if so how this was evident in course outlines, learning outcomes and evaluation strategies. I was interested in how the CYC thesis experience might link to CYC field work or practicum learning. I wondered about the nature of student inquiries, and if these were congruent with CYC relational practice.

My investigation was an informal review based on publicly available documents found on institutional websites, hosted in libraries, or provided to me by teaching colleagues. I looked at 18 course outlines and nearly 250 CYC student thesis projects, titles and abstracts. My observations?

The material I reviewed was well written, thorough, and topical; it represented a great deal of effort by

students and faculty. The course outlines all described a clear approval process resting with faculty and adhered to a high standard of research ethics. There was good work here.

But there were other observations. I noted a prescribed use of propositional writing and formal English academic prose to express knowledge only in conceptual terms. I noted a predominant use of a detached third person voice; lots of writing about children as objects, with few examples of first person narratives, ethnographic, situational, intersubjective or interpersonal forms of cognition. There seemed to be a reliance on objective means of measurement as evidence – particularly the use of traditional methods and the use of stable study designs to meet analytical or normative objectives. There was little evidence of experiential knowing by acquaintance, participation, or the use of performative or multi modal epistemologies; few examples of phronesis, practice



wisdom, or reflection, and no reference to memory, spirituality, sensory or embodied experience as evidence or methodology, or to situationally locate the author. I observed a reliance on externalized recognized adult and privileged authority with little evidence of direct youth contribution, voice, engagement, co-authorship or advisement. I noted the language in CYC research courses seemed to be different than that used in other CYC course outlines. It was less reflective, relational and the course delivery methods were certainly less embodied than those described in non-thesis CYC courses. And finally I found no evidence of integration with or reference to student field work or practicum experiences.

I must reiterate that this review was not a systematic sampling, nor a detailed content analysis. It was a preliminary 'wander and wonder'. The work I reviewed was excellent, but it made me worry that as our CYC educational credentials migrate into higher academic institutional settings we seemed by default to be adopting the voice of privilege often associated with academia. I wondered if the intention of CYC thesis course work was to assist in the preparation of research minded CYC relational practitioners, or to prepare candidates for graduate school. Was this a slippery slope or an academic

necessity? Institutionally, was the preparation of graduates for graduate school, typically in a discipline other than CYC, now an expectation needed to be met by CYC educators in order to keep up with credential creep?

Although I hope this brief article will encourage CYC educators and students to consider these questions, recall that my original motivation during my sabbatical was to consider the thesis track in my own BCYC program. When I returned to our CYC thesis course after a sabbatical I realized sadly that it was reading just like the rest: a very strong academic exercise, but dominated by the voice of traditional academics not CYC practice. Fortunately, Humber College as an institution was responsive to

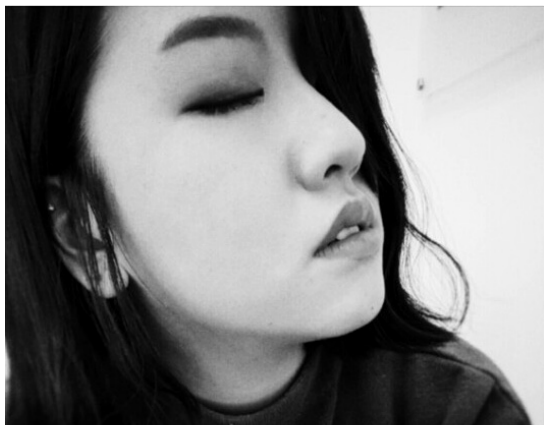
this observation and supported my wandering and wondering by supporting the creation of a new 4th year course in the BCYC program. This course was to be a companion to our traditional undergraduate thesis; a course that recognized not just *one* way of knowing, a course that honoured ways of knowing that were often marginalized in traditional academia. Collaboration is of course an essential component in CYC practice, and thus creating a companion course rather than an isolated elective, demonstrated both congruence with CYC practice, and a respect for both the traditional academic and the less traditional approach to research inquiry.



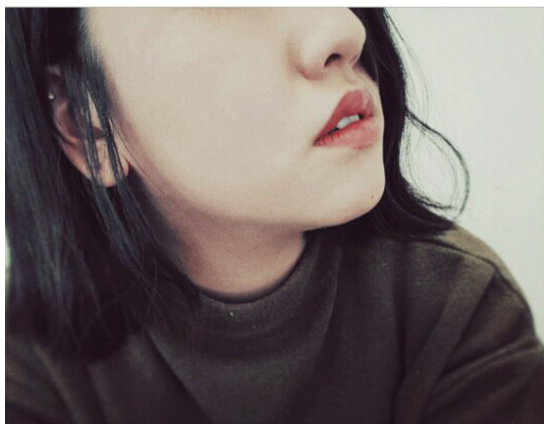


The companion course designed was entitled: Ways of Knowing. Its intention was to engage students with research as part of a larger living system. The images accompanying this article were all created by students on this course. This is not the work of visual arts students, but the work of 4th year CYC students with little or no 'formal training' in the arts; students who found ways to express their wisdom using other than APA format.

While writing their thesis in the traditional thesis course, students in Ways of Knowing were asked to consider voice as embodied expression. They worked physically to explore their ideas and by so doing challenged myths associated with objectivity and anthropocentric thinking. Migrating out of the classroom and into various community and studio settings, students in Ways of Knowing read about arts based research but, more importantly, they conducted their own arts based investigation. They used sketchbooks, cameras, video, movement, music and poetry to situate themselves emotionally in relationship to and with their thesis inquiry. Academic literature, and the necessity for peer reviews, prescribed voice and formatting, challenges to validity and reliability were all respectfully redirected to the traditional thesis classroom. In the Ways of Knowing



course students worked alongside art and music students, young people in community and guest artists. They used their experience, physical and emotional responses as input. In studio work and in their sketch books they were asked to research and describe their emotional wisdom in relation to their thesis inquiry.



The learning process was deep and wide. Both in class and in the processes of creating work there were many examples of physical 'aha' moments as students worked through various mediums to make connections, give voice and come to know the wisdom of their lived experience. Unlike many academic courses, the emphasis in Ways of Knowing was on process and not the production of a final product. Although each student was asked to complete a mid-semester

piece that 'situated' them in relationship with their topic, a sketchbook documenting their process, and create a final work that expressed their emotional wisdom, work was not evaluated against normative standards. Students were not rewarded or recognized if they could draw or paint more competently than others. Together with faculty, students created feedback processes that were relational and non-judgmental – expressive rather than anxiety provoking.



The final sharing of work by the BCYC graduating class this past winter featured tri fold posters which celebrated student knowledge. These thesis projects were remarkable. But this year there were 63 other works created through arts based research that share emotional wisdom alongside academic knowledge. Such a collaborative sharing was a physical demonstration of the course intention to integrate knowledge and wisdom. Poster boards, and short student presentations celebrated work, scholarship and knowledge, while the art work legitimized 'other ways' through which students had come to know children, youth, and self-providing evidence of student wisdom acquired through care and sensory engagement; honouring experience as wisdom not as bias.

I hope the images accompanying this article will remain with you and give you pause. I believe as CYC educators we need to consider how our approach to preparing CYC students as researchers sits within the larger ethos of CYC practice. As educators I believe we need to consider if CYC thesis and research course work is congruent with CYC practice. To ask if our approach to the undergraduate thesis experience encourages students to situate self, to recognize emotional wisdom, to express this through embodied means and to experiment with research methods that are congruent with CYC relational practice. Should we not recognize the privilege associated when as educators we dictate writing forms that are hyper regulated and culturally narrow? This constricted form of expression dictates not only form but content, and typically results in student work that is 'about' young people rather than 'with' young people. Many CYC undergraduate thesis experiences seems to reinforce presumptions about objectivity rather than daring to explore ways of knowing that are sensory and intersubjective. And

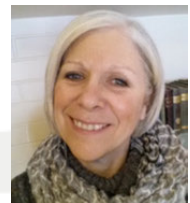
the evaluative strategies associated with this research often imply a systemic valuing of knowledge as restricted, limited and too closely associated with power.

What I know is that my experience last winter in the Ways of Knowing course was the best learning experience of my life. Working with students through arts informed research challenged me to think about the student thesis experience *vis a vis* the CYC ethos of meaning making as a shared endeavor; to consider teaching and learning alternatives that valued process over product. I think there are ways to do this; to approach the CYC undergraduate thesis in ways that demonstrate the openness to voice, anti-oppression, inter-subjectivity, creativity, and embodiment that we work so hard to teach and to which we aspire as CYC practitioners. Aristotle called this Phronesis. Heidegger referred to it as the elucidation of being in the world when we allow it to 'unconceal' itself. What we as CYC educators call this approach to research is immaterial. What is important is that work created through embodied practice situates the student as a maker celebrating the wisdom of hands, hearts *and* heads; situating the student within their own learning journey....

*And with maps lost in imagination we climb to another place.
Seeking not to name, or measure, but to look back to see.
Recognizing our sixth sense
And by necessity and indirection find wisdom
Anonymous, new creeds
Balancing the daily larcenies imposed by mere language.*

Heather Snell

is a faculty member in the Bachelor of Child and Youth Care program at Humber College, Toronto, Canada and is the Chair of the Research Committee on the Child and Youth Care Education Accreditation Board of Canada. Her eclectic background draws her to work in the 'in-betweens' - merging disciplines, supporting collaborations, learning and building capacity while seeking excellence in child and youth care education and practice.



Acting in Support of Youth Voice: Theatre as Equitable Education

Bridget Liang, Kerry Boileau, Wolfgang Vachon and Falon Wilton

Keywords

arts-based education, improvisation, respectability politics, anti-oppressive practices, experiential education, CYC training

In Child and Youth Care (CYC) practice (and I say practice, because we never stop learning), one of our aims is to dismantle oppression. In addition to barriers like racism, sexism, classism, ableism, *et al.*, young people are often afforded the least social opportunities of all. While not discriminating against children and youth as per human rights codes is a start, how do we move forward from there?

In arts practice, one of our aims is to encourage expression. Art is a platform for people to speak their truth, invite discussion, and implore change.

Acting Out is a simulation-based training program, run by SKETCH in Toronto. Formed in 1996, Sketch now stands as a creative arts studio, offering marginalized young folks a place to play and transform. Through Acting Out young people with lived-experience in the social service sector (we like the term “system-wise”), are trained to use theatre to engage in system change. In an effort to recognize the knowledge that they bring, and the skills they learn in the program, we call the people in Acting Out “trainers”. Through building improvisation and communication skills, trainers work together preparing to share their voices and knowledge with service providers. Professionals working in youth-serving organizations then have the opportunity to learn practically, by interacting in “real-life” scenarios created by system-wise young people. The trainers develop leadership skills, and workers build their capacities to support young people. Acting Out has a dream that everyone working with young people living on the margins is first taught by young people with lived-experience. The program explores the intersections between creativity, CYC, and adversity through the power of interactive scenarios. By engaging us (mostly

young) students in simulations of youth/practitioner interactions, we then have the opportunity to bring our lives and voices into our education.

In the following article we present to you four perspectives on the value of this program in the CYC classroom: from a trainer actor, a trainer facilitator, a college professor, and a college student. These written pieces act as a meta extension of what Acting Out provides to all who are engaged with and by it. In other words, we analyze/express how simulation-based learning has fostered growth in us, using our voices as mentors and youth of varying identities. In each piece of this collective paper, we unpack the notion that grownups know best.

The Importance of Acting Out

Bridget Liang (they/them pronouns)

So some of you may be rolling your eyes right now. Another piece of shameless self-promotion to say that our group is better than others, right? That's a legit assumption and it is definitely a part of what I'm doing here. I quite enjoy having a little more money in my pocket. But I also want to say that the work that Acting Out does has value.

Acting Out is a space for those of us who come from/live in fucked up lives and/or face tons of barriers in life. The hiring process in Acting Out is heavily influenced by who has need, who has relevant life experiences, and a little less about who has performing skills. This means that people's value in Acting Out is not based on the unattainable standards of meritocratic settler c(r)apitalist society.

For me, Acting Out has helped me survive without having to jump through anxiety-provoking red tape bureaucracy. I was brought in because traditional forms of employment are about as understanding as a doctor about to give you a needle (it won't hurt a bit!). There's this assumption that I'm a child and can't make my own decisions and judgments and thus can't be given much autonomy. It's especially awkward because I'm 27 years old with a nearly complete master's degree and am a budding scholar/writer/performance artist/youth worker.

Although it is not regular enough of a wage to actually count on, Acting Out has helped me ride through when I didn't have any income. We just don't get enough workshops for any of us to have a regular income, and this is one of the reasons why we need more people bringing us in. When we are working, not only are we having an impact, but it also means that marginalized young people who can't get jobs elsewhere can actually get paid.

Acting Out has helped me develop skills and ideas. I gained more legal knowledge on how to protect my friends and myself when discrimination happens at the hands of people who say they're here to "help" us. I also learned how to give healthier feedback and how to create a space open to discussing conflict. During rehearsals, our facilitator makes it clear that we can voice the things we like and dislike, our discontents, and even tell her off if she's doing something wrong. We have created and learned ways to support one another and help nudge each other's skills in constructive ways. It's the closest thing I've ever felt to safety. Probably why I'm infamous for falling asleep all over the place. I'm just that comfortable. Speaking of traditionally inappropriate behaviours, being in a space where different ways of being in the world is accepted... It's really nice. No one thinks it's inappropriate that I make all sorts of little noises to express how I'm feeling. The way my mind works and how I communicate with my peers is (usually) valid and accepted.

In academic terms, "respectability politics" are profoundly absent in Acting Out. Respectability politics are based in white, cis/heteronormative, able bodied, neurotypical, non-poor, non-fat norms and thus being something other than this norm is often regarded as unprofessional. Respectability politics is a good chunk of the reason why I'm unable to find employment. My very existence is offensive to professionalism norms. And it reflects in who I end up doing workshops for both for Acting Out and as an individual consultant. I rarely see people with my identities in positions of power. I haven't met any openly, visibly autistic people teaching CYC classes. I have never met a trans woman attending a workshop I've given to students or professionals. We need more people than Acting Out supporting and cultivating people who face multiple barriers in life to get into positions of power and authority. Preferably the kind that come with a living wage.

Now as to what we actually do that's actually transformative. We give workshops that are visceral, hands on, and practical using performative, interactive, law-based activities. With our performing skills, we give students and professionals that work with young people a chance to practice their skills in a simulated environment. The scenes and characters we play are made up of little bits of us and the things we've faced. They're real. The situations we present could very well involve someone that you may meet on the job or when walking down the street. After the scene we give feedback in a way that's structured to be more supportive while refusing to coddle the individual. We challenge people generally to hold their discomfort and be open to learning new things. We do this because we want to help create better, more supportive people who work with young people in our communities. We do this because we dream of a world where what we've

gone through won't happen again. Our job isn't to criticize but to work with someone to help them grow. And hopefully grow alongside their peers.

So there you have it. Here's my personal testimony. It's not a perfect program by far. But who is perfect? We're growing and learning just like all of you are. We're going to mess up too, but that's part of being human. And as a fellow human, I'd like to invite you to join me in learning together and trying to figure out this strange world we all have to live together in.

In a CYC Classroom Setting, We Are Here to Act Out

Kerry Boileau (she/her pronouns)

I appreciate when people are patient and kind, with me and with others. I feel grateful when people take time to grasp that every person's process is different.

I am happy when people see me, listen to me, and hear what I am saying. It feels particularly satisfying if the people seeing me are delighted or notice something they hadn't before we interacted

And then, if the interaction is even more reciprocal, and I too am delighted at seeing and hearing them, and notice something I hadn't before?

For me, this mutual understanding is bliss. Mutual understanding is not always perceived as an easily attainable outcome. It can and often does involve struggle and discomfort before a payoff. With a lot of questioning, listening and practice, I have learned valuable tools from all the people with whom I have encountered creatively.

Currently, and for the past nine or so years, I work (almost entirely) with a fluctuating group of young people who have experienced significant barriers. We call ourselves Acting Out. I am an Acting Out Facilitator. I use she, her and hers pronouns.

When I was a small child I noticed quite acutely, that people, young people especially, experienced being seen and heard in hugely varying and disparate ways. Adults could always, ultimately, turn the volume of our voices right down, or off... for as long as they liked... sometimes it seemed like no one saw or heard us for long periods of time. Some of us were seen or valued more, and some less. Much less. I later learned that my early attempts at analysis, was how I tried to make sense of something called oppression. Intersecting systems of oppression.

These imposed, and often-unstated hierarchies, that deny many of us access to dignity and the right to care for ourselves and each other adequately, steered me, formally and informally to look for more truths, and for different truths. I've been urged to

begin and begin, again and again, the long and often painful process of excavation. Digging through the parts of myself and my culture that unquestioningly accept what is silently and pervasively damaging all around us for clarity. What is “normal” anyway? Why are some aspects of people considered respectable, normal and desired and not others? Who made these rules?

As a young person, adulthood felt thick and stifling around me. I had very little control of my life and I simply could not understand why more adult people did not want to hear what all of us young people were really thinking, experiencing and needing. I still wonder that.

My most current colleagues (many for more than a decade) and I, have been working/playing/talking/building/creating/exploring with, and listening to, young people, older people and the voices of elders for most of our adult lives. I have learned, and continue to learn so much about the structures and beliefs that are in place that have confused and saddened me so much. I also continue to learn with young people, how to effectively and repeatedly challenge, first my own, and then others’ “expertise”. I like to witness different kinds knowing and being an expert.

The bulk of my learning has been shepherded by the willing and brave, young seekers and folks who work with me to grow our creative, trusting, caring, brilliant, grateful, and sometimes angry, disgruntled and terrified selves into our fuller and more grown selves.

Acting Out’s primary objective in a CYC classroom, from this facilitator’s perspective, is to challenge students intending to pursue a career in CYC practice. When interacting and learning with Acting Out Trainers, CYC students can practice beginning the journey of finding comfort inviting, truly hearing and integrating feedback like complaints and hopes of young and marginalized people (and associated communities) into CYC practice, and all programming with young people.

One of the most difficult things for me to hear is a young person I work with (or anyone, really!) telling me how I messed up, could have done things better or failed to meet expectations. Conversely, this is also one of the most exciting things for me to hear. I believe if young people feel safe and comfortable enough to challenge and address their concerns about how I’ve behaved, what I’ve said or our programs, processes and curricula, it is because they have belief that their voice is important. This is a celebration! I want to highlight and nurture their personal agency as well as affirm and center their experience. There is a lot to learn there, by welcoming and encouraging young people to hold us accountable. Another big celebration is when I can hold that space, not react from a defensive place and take the time, asking for more help in creating more equitable ways of being together.

The whole process of an Acting Out session in a CYC classroom can feel scary for students. The scenarios, or simulations feel too real sometimes and students often feel ill equipped to adequately “help” the young person’s character in a situation where individual and systemic transphobia, racism, ableism and classism may be impacting a young person (and truthfully, these oppressive forces, and others, impact us all). It is tough to be exposed as not having the correct helping “answers” when one is supposed to be learning to be a helper. How else are we to learn how to deconstruct and demolish oppressive forces and internal biases that hurt so many people, if we can’t hear from diverse members of multiple marginalized communities about what they are really thinking, experiencing and needing? I have learned so many tangible strategies, while trying my hardest to be so brave with young people, about changing all of our biased and oppressive practices. Feel free to contact me for a list.

As Judy Vaughn (2013), an activist I know little else about says, “You don’t think your way into a different way of acting; you act your way into a different way of thinking.”

Let’s continue to challenge ourselves to act our way into a different ways of thinking. I believe in us.

Acting, Listening, Acting, Listening ...

Wolfgang Vachon (he/him pronouns)

One of the core tenets of Acting Out is listening and reacting. I’d like to begin with a story of my contribution to this article. In writing these four pieces together we decided to give each other feedback on our first drafts. Receiving feedback is an opportunity to learn and grow. As an educator I’m very used to giving other people feedback, I also solicit it from students at various times throughout the semester. I know the feedback I’ve received has improved my teaching, writing, CYC practice and interactions with young people – it can also be uncomfortable to hear how I’m perceived, read, and understood. Here is an example of feedback I received on my first draft: *“I’d like you to explicitly name why youth voice is important. Make explicit reference to the history of colonization and violence that CYC work is built upon and to address the overwhelming whiteness, heterocisnormativity, ableism, and many other isms inherent in who ends up in positions of power.”* The comments on my contribution to this article allowed me the opportunity to (re)examine my social locations as a 46-year-old white settler-educated cis-male college professor and how these inform my perspectives.

Engaging and fostering young people's voices in the services they are part of has been shown to be beneficial for young people, the adults who work with them, and the agencies the young people are part of (Newbury and Vachon, submitted). Historically, young peoples' voices have been ignored or dismissed. This is particularly true when those voices are marginalized youth and children. Social service agencies and practitioners have been complicit in this silencing; see for example the history of residential schools (and their continuing legacies) in Canada, the USA, Australia, and Aotearoa/New Zealand. Charles (2015), writes about the origins of CYC practice as starting, in part, during a period he calls the "child saving era... [which] was rooted in a sense of moral supremacy...it was based upon a societal belief that there was a way of life and a way of being that was superior to any other. Superiority was based upon ethnicity, gender, ability, class and religion" (p.53). This historical reading is a particular framing of how CYC came into being, other factors also informed its formation (which, of course, does not exclude this history) as additional feedback reminded me. *"There is another view than the history provided by Charles' read ... women have been supporting young people in various ways and capacities for thousands of years. I am struck by Charles colonial read of what he is labeling colonialism. Child and Youth Care existed long before the 'child saving era' when men entered the arena."* These multiple truths (along with others) are crucial to hold as we write, read, and discuss the history of our practice.

Finding ways to solicit feedback is crucial in working with young people (and colleagues), developing the capacity to hear and incorporate the feedback is equally important. This is a lifelong process. I will never be a perfect teacher, writer, or practitioner; accepting this is like the proverbial drug addict who must first admit they have a problem. After acknowledging I still have much to learn, I need to ask for support and guidance, then I need to do something about it. Being a CYC involves reflexivity and action. It's a humbling profession and as an educator it's my responsibility to model and provide opportunities for students to experience reflecting and acting.

With that in mind, rather than only incorporating the feedback into my section, I decided to make transparent some of the feedback I received. I do this in an effort not to hide the "voice" of others or in some way to position myself as different than I am. It would, in some respects, be easier for me to make changes and not show where I was challenged and supported, and thus how I am presented with encouragements to learn and grow. As a way to model feedback I'm making transparent the feedback I received (which I will italicize). An unfortunate consequence of this is that the piece written by the

older academic is now the longest of the four (a consequence I am uncomfortable with). The first piece of feedback I received was to *“open with some kind of story/example/ scenario to catch the attention of the readers,”* I hope the preceding paragraphs do this.

The need and value of young people being involved in issues affecting them is increasingly recognized within CYC practice (Blanchet-Cohen, Linds, Mann-Feder, & Yuen, 2013) and allied disciplines (Akiva, Cortina, & Smith 2014). Demonstrations of how “youth engagement” informs agency decisions are now being required by accreditation organizations, government ministries, and funding bodies. A recent review of residential care in Ontario, Canada highlighted the need for “youth voice” to be built into all residential programs in the province (Gharabaghi, Trocmé, & Newman, 2016). In post-secondary institutions, forums have developed to encourage student input in to policies, practices, and even curriculum. At the college where I teach, there is a monthly meeting of student and faculty representatives to discuss various issues impacting learning, everyone having an opportunity to set the agenda (including students and faculty not present at the actual meeting) and speak to the items raised. “Hey, I go to these meetings! They’re really engaging and productive.” This has contributed to many, and some significant, changes within the programs represented. There is also representation by recent graduates on the school’s program advisory council which is comprised of various community stakeholders. All of these initiatives are important and positive steps. “While it is great that the program involves the voices of students and recent graduates, it has the distinct possibility of re-inscribing oppressive values without more explicit representation and discussion of anti-oppressive values and representations of who occupies positions of power and authority.” This is true, for example we used to have student representation until the College decided that students were no longer allowed to sit on the advisory council. The full-time faculty is overwhelming white, as is senior administration, this does not at all reflect the student body. While some may disagree, based upon my conversations with marginalized young people, fellow educators, and CYC practitioners, I do not see issues of gender, race, “heterocisnormativity, ableism, and many other isms inherent in who ends up in positions of power” being adequately addressed in post-secondary education or child and youth care as a profession. Programs like Acting Out can be part of addressing this.

While there are steps being taken to bring young people’s voices into agencies and student’s voices into schools, missing from post-secondary CYC programs are the voices of young people who will be the ultimate recipients of the education taught. Beyond youth panels and tragedy testimonials, I am not aware of any CYC school that systematically

builds into the program design, and curriculum development, the voice of children or youth who have been involved in and impacted by child welfare, criminal justice, refugee/immigration policies, poverty, mental illness, and/or various other (potentially oppressive) structures. This is not to erase or diminish the many CYC students who have had such experiences. It is also important to recognize that given the role of students and the potential trauma of these experiences, those students may not be willing (or able) to speak of their experiences (nor is it their obligation to do so).

Students are rarely provided opportunities for, and lived examples of, direct practice leading toward developing the skills necessary for youth engagement and voice being integrated into their practice. If students do not actually experience listening to and integrating lived experiences of (other) racialized, stigmatized and marginalized youth throughout their education, how likely are they to see it as legitimate? *“Yes, this is completely true and I see it in the attitudes of my classmates – even in myself.”* How likely are they to have the capacity to genuinely solicit voice when working with young people? *“AND YET ... the vast majority of people in the classroom ARE YOUTH? And you acknowledge that many students also have been involved in, or engaged with many of the structures of oppression. ... and then you defer that these same folks should not be obligated, expected to speak to these experiences.”* The social location of students as youth (mostly) is crucial to recognize, and certainly confers an insider expert knowledge regarding young people which I (and many faculty) no longer possess. This at times can be forgotten and, unfortunately, sometimes those perspectives are dismissed. Students have a huge and valuable contribution to make; educators need to continually solicit feedback, draw upon lived experiences, and otherwise honour the wisdom of students. And... students who come into CYC programs are not necessarily representative of who they will be working with. Just as practitioners cannot rely upon colleagues exclusively when working with young people, students cannot rely exclusively upon one another and their teachers when learning. If students do not see their institutions soliciting and including children and youth in curriculum development and delivery, how likely are they to see it as needed and valuable? *“I love this perspective so much!”*

Since 2008, Acting Out has been coming into the college where I work to deliver workshops, provide students opportunity to practice listening to young people, and to reflect on their interactions. Using a simulation-based process, students draw upon skills learned in the program to develop relationship, support the young person, and have interactions with trainers. After the simulation comes to an end, the student is invited to reflect upon the choices they made and what they might do differently. They are then

asked if they want to hear the perspective of the trainer (which they can decline). After the young person speaks to their experience in the simulation, anyone else who watched the interaction can comment upon what they saw. Thus, students are presented with an opportunity to practice skills learned in class, and (perhaps more importantly) to begin listening to and centering the perspective of young people, as well as peers. The young person speaks about the interaction before I do as a teacher. *"...maybe mention that you are white and that many students are POC (people of colour)"*. True, many of the students, and trainers, are people of colour, and the vast majority (of students) do not identify as male (which I do). In this, I hope to disrupt the notion that the professor has all the knowledge or the most important knowledge. Indeed, the model tries to show that there are multiple valid knowledges and ways of understanding interactions with young people. For example, it is not uncommon for the trainer to say things that I disagree with or to suggest ways of working that I consider troubling. *"What do you mean by this comment? Are you admitting your discomfort with our decisions, or are you internally making a negative judgment of the suggestions of the Trainers?"* People have different experiences and these inform their understanding and perspective. For example, a trainer who has had a negative experience with the child welfare system may say the student should not have called Children's Aid when legally the student was obliged to do so (in the simulation). I disagree that in the simulation the student should not have called CAS. In the discussion that ensues tremendous learning happens and I'm extremely grateful for the conversation. Are there times when working with young people that I have discomfort with their decisions? Yes, absolutely: non adult sex work, overdosing on drugs, beating somebody up, attempting suicide, and many others. I do not think I have negative judgements of the suggestions of the trainers (although I will reflect more upon this). On the contrary I think the different perspectives are one of the many benefits of the program. What I teach and what young people experience are going to be different at times. *"Especially as an older white (ad infinitum) man!"* How do we reconcile these contradictions, do we have to? I bring awareness to the contradictions and open a place for discussion. I do not try to "resolve" the contradictions and see the disquieting space as an opportunity for learning, dialogue, and challenge.

The program has developed over the years based upon new needs and understandings of how to best support students, the trainers, and CYC practice. Acting Out continuously modifies scenarios based upon issues that students will likely face in placement and the lived experience of trainers. Going forward in 2017, Acting Out and the College will pilot an arts-based process bringing trainers and students together to

consider the school's CYC bachelor's program and then forward these insights and suggestions to faculty (and hopefully the program advisory committee). The school is also looking at ways to solicit and incorporate the voices of children, so they too can shape the CYC program. Thus we are modelling to students the value of children and youth voice, presenting them opportunities to develop engagement skills, and providing them emotional support throughout the process.

The transformation from doing simulations with young people and receiving feedback (which will continue), to working collaboratively with students and trainers looking at CYC education mirrors the trajectory (and shifts) we see in CYC practice: doing for, doing to, doing with, done by, done without. All of these are relevant and important elements of practice. Early practitioners often want to do for young people (we see this all the time in the simulations) rather than provide young people the opportunities to do for themselves; there are times we do to young people (sometimes appropriately so, others times oppressively); perhaps the most fun are the times we do with; where possible we support young people to do by themselves; and finally, all young people will eventually move on (or age out), our intention is that through the time they spend with us they will have the capacity to do without us¹ (~~within the limits of their individual neurodiversity and physical ability~~) *"I would suggest to cut the part where you talked about neurodiversity and physical ability in brackets. It was something all disabled folks at Acting Out felt uncomfortable with. I feel that it frames disability as a limitation and not as just a different embodiment in the world... I heard a story about a bird, a fish, and a tiger. They tried to climb a tree and the fish and bird complained that they couldn't do it and felt there was something wrong with them. They all tried to dive to the bottom of the ocean and the bird and tiger complained that they couldn't do it and felt there was something wrong with them. They tried to touch the clouds and the tiger and fish complained they couldn't do it and felt there was something wrong with them. The moral of this little story is that each of these animals had something they could do really well and it didn't matter that they couldn't do everything. They all had different roles, different strengths and weaknesses."*

¹ "I'd like there to be the mention that although we do aim to "empower" people, it doesn't always lead to them becoming "independent". People age out or never had the privilege to access youth services. People who face multiple marginalizations will still face violence and oppression on a daily basis even after they turn 30. I'd rather think more about creating interdependence – the notion that we create relationships that we depend on each other. It's a relationship that's vulnerable, but more equitable and acknowledges that we all have needs and should need each other to survive."

We see system-wise young people working alongside students discussing and analyzing CYC teaching and learning as a model of what CYC education and practice can be. It gives weight to voice, it models equity, it provides skills, it asks people to take risks and possibly be uncomfortable, and we suspect it will make the school's program better. *"I really do believe it will."*

As a faculty member who has Acting Out come into some of the courses I teach, I hear repeatedly from students that it is one of (for some *the*) best aspect of those courses. While this is humbling as a teacher, it is gratifying as an educator. Every semester I see students struggle and succeed while encountering Acting Out, it is a powerful reminder of how hard and rewarding it is to be a CYC practitioner. I recently spoke to a student who I had taught in his diploma program and who had just completed his bachelor's degree. In total he spent five years at the college. On his last day of school he told me the Acting Out program he did in his first semester was the single most valuable experience of his entire time at the college.

A Playground of Moments: Acting In with Acting Out

Falon Wilton (she/her(s) Pronouns)

If you've been to school for a diploma in Child and Youth Care – at least, at Humber College in Toronto – you've probably heard the phrase "moment to moment" once or twice during your studies. Well, probably twenty plus times in the first semester, if we're being real here. These words are often used when talking big concepts, like resiliency and rhythmicity. Yet, a "moment" when undefined by experience, may often remain another big, mystified concept to us CYC students.

In the first literal sense, a moment refers to "a brief and/or exact period", like a second or a minute. Interestingly enough, it also means "importance". Whatever way you spin it, a moment is a short but distinct time of some significance. Perhaps unlike psychologists, social workers, and psychiatrists (okay, definitely unlike psychiatrists), we're deliberately taught to observe these bursts of time. We're told to participate in them, and even to create them. Being a CYC is unique to other social and mental health care professions, in that our work isn't just done from across a desk. So why in school, then, do we *define* moments from behind ours?

The smallest occurrences can hold the greatest meaning, even if that meaning isn't realized until much later. In college, our aim is hopefully to realize them sooner. My

classmates and I were given the opportunity to do just that in our first semester ever, when an organization of talented young actors showed up to our Relational Practices class. The group of trainers is named Acting Out, a playful reference to the way grownups often chastise kids for behaviour they don't like. One of Acting Out's main roles (haha) was to help us feel out when/where to intervene, to support, or to just be present. We were lovingly thrown into simulations of practitioner/youth scenarios, and given helpful feedback from our peers afterwards. Such an idea scared the living wits out of me. Well, maybe not *all* of them. Still, I worried how I, an autistic person, would handle the sensory and informational overload of the whole interaction. So many people would be watching me ...

With some courage, I pushed myself to take my turn on the first day. I had somewhat of an advantage, though: first-day volunteers got to intervene on scenarios that Acting Out had just performed for us. Of course, the opportunity to re-address the exact conflict where another worker has failed will not always arise in the "workforce". Yet, observing others' strengths and weaknesses does facilitate learning, and alternative action. I chose to play a CYC dealing with a frustrated parent, my gears turning with all the ways I could act differently. His son was being bullied at school because his classmates thought him gay, and he was demanding action from the principal and me. The scenario didn't directly engage with any young characters (unless the father was also under 30, which is possible). Still, the decisions I was making at that point in time would directly affect the young person's life. How would I handle this father's concerns for his son? What could I do to protect this child's right to safely, and proudly, be himself?

I thought of the Influence Techniques we learned in class. I thought of "Conveying Caring", for example; the words "we're on the same team" echoed in my skull. Surely this man was yelling at me because he thought people didn't care enough about this child? I thought of all the times I felt antagonized when my feelings were dismissed. So, I tried to validate his, assuring him that he was right to be furious.

But that wasn't enough.

He wanted me to *do* something, not just say something. It wasn't enough to just observe this moment of anger. As a femme woman, I have been taught to be gentle, to feel for others. And as a middle-class white Canadian (of almost strictly British heritage), I've learned to show those feelings quietly. It nearly terrified me, the aspie* femme, to have a man shout in my face. *He was so loud*. But as I cheerlead myself to look him in the eye, I saw that our experiences shaped our needs differently. This person of colour in front of me probably didn't need my WASP-y respectability politics.

So, I passionately acknowledged that we should have acted sooner, as a school, to protect his child from harassment from peers based on his (perceived) orientation. Then, I assured him that justice would be pursued, and his son's safety would be ensured. I wasn't sure how yet, but I told the father that we would be meeting with his teacher to figure it all out. He wanted to know *when* we planned to meet, soon deciding that he would be there. And with that, we shook hands. *End scene*.

Before that day, I had thought a lot about what a "moment" is, and even more about the meaning of "moment-to-moment". Then, through role play, I saw moments defined by the convergence of past knowledge and lived history, bound with present action, to create positive change for the future. I saw tiny points in time – like every second a parent demanded better for their child – weave together in motion, creating even larger moments. Moments of non-silence. Of alliance. Of support. My day with Acting Out was my first learning peak on the CYC playground of experience, a snapshot I'll carry with me into placement.

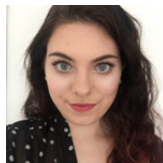
* Aspie: (Informal) *Noun*. A person with Asperger Syndrome. *Adjective*. Having traits of Asperger Syndrome. Both forms are often used by those who identify as autistic to describe themselves, and sometimes others that appear to share these traits.

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Falon Wilton

is a CYC diploma student at Humber College. She is a self-described nerd, and is constantly consuming new articles about trauma, neurodiversity, healing, and anti-oppression. When she's not at school or reading, Falon is participating in community care groups. In these collectives, she and other femme folk provide peer support in the form of: offering solidarity, sharing experiences, and trading resources. Falon looks forward to incorporating this expanding knowledge and skill set in her CYC practice.



Bridget Liang

is a mixed race, queer, transfeminine, neurodiverse, disabled, fat fangirl. They came into their queerness in Hamilton Ontario and co-founded RADAR Youth Group at the LGBTQ Wellness Centre (the Well), the first queer group in a high school in Hamilton, and were instrumental in the passing of an equity policy in the HWDSB (Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board). They have worked for a number of queer/trans organizations and groups over the years both in Hamilton and Toronto. They are finishing their MA in Critical Disability Studies at York. They have been involved with community research, workshop and group facilitation, and doing performance art.



Kerry Boileau

coordinates the Acting Out Program at SKETCH Working Arts in Toronto where she has been a facilitator for 14 years. She brings her passion for theatre arts, young people, and systemic change into a unique program that engages LGBTQ2SIA youth with lived experience 'in the system' to provide exceptional educational and clinical opportunities for service and care providers. These providers learn directly from the experts (the young people) about how to work effectively with people in ways that recognize, value and honour diverse experiences of all kinds. She has also been an instructor in the Child and Youth Care Program at Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning for 5 years.



Wolfgang Vachon

entered child and youth care through theatre. He has been working with children and youth as an educator, artist, and advocate for over two decades. During the late 1980s he began employing interactive theatre processes to explore health choices with marginalized and street-identified youth. Community arts practice has informed his work with diverse young people including those in detention, state care, street involved and homeless, LGBTQ, and survivors of trauma. Wolfgang is a full-time faculty member in the Child and Youth Care programs at Humber College, and is the host of CYC Podcast: Discussions on Child and Youth Care (www.cycpodcast.org)



The Matter of Care

Monica Pauls and Catherine Smey Carston

If we want to produce people who will care for one another, then it makes sense to give students practice in caring and reflection on that practice

– Noddings, 1998, p.191, as cited in Smith, 2016

Keywords

concept of care, intentional practice, unconscious expertise, identifying tacit knowledge, digital storytelling

The Bachelor of Child Studies (BCST) program at Mount Royal University in Calgary, Alberta, allows students to major in one of the following two disciplines: Child and Youth Care Counselling (CYCC) or Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC). The program provides a combination of theoretical and experiential learning to prepare students to be strong advocates for children and youth in the community (Mount Royal University, 2016). Both majors (CYCC and ELCC) have the term 'care' embedded in the discipline title, as well as in their scope of practice. As faculty and past practitioners, we understand what care means in a professional context, but do our students? We were interested in learning how students define and implement the concept of care as they move into practice.

It is an easy assumption to make that one would not even consider working in these fields, were they not a caring person. But despite the idea that care is innate, this may not be true for everyone and, considering the diverse experience and backgrounds of people, care may be understood differently depending on how they were cared for themselves (Rockel, 2009; Noddings, 2002). Students are often drawn to this work because of a passion or calling to work with children (Stuart, 2013); as a program, we accept students who often self-identify as caring and wanting to make a difference in the lives of children. But is this enough? Does a caring person make an effective practitioner? Should we teach about care in practice, and if so, how?

Care as a Concept

Care is a curious concept and has been understood in a variety of ways in the context of work with children and youth. Historically thought of as something innate in women, it only made sense that women were the ones to work with children. Mothers first demonstrated care for children in the home. These activities were transferred into work as women moved into fields of public employment (Ricks, 1992; Rockel, 2009). Children were thought of as needing protection and safety; if this was not provided by their parents, then it was assumed that another woman, naturally, could do the job (Rockel, 2009). This perception devalued care as an important component of professional practice (Taggart, 2014).

Over time, the idea of care in a professional context evolved from a routine, task-based practice to a relationship-based approach. This perspective establishes care as a pedagogy or foundational ethic for work with children and youth (Linke & Fleer, 2002, as cited in Rockel, 2009). Most practitioners would consider care to be an essential part of their practice (Taggart, 2014). It then makes sense to expect that care, a key component of our work, is taught through academic and experiential learning. In turn, students should use this new found knowledge as they move into the field.

The process of connecting theory to practice is an interesting one. As students move into a professional context, they bring with them their personal experience and the theory learned through their course work. This combined knowledge is applied in practice, which influences their actions and reflexively modifies their understanding in a continuous learning cycle (Hardy, 2004). Thinking about care in this way, we wondered where students' interpretations of care originated and how these understandings informed their practice as they gained more experience.

We decided to explore these questions through the use of digital storytelling. A digital story is a two to five minute narrative that uses photos, video clips, art and sound to share information and understanding (Community Story Strategies, 2016). The process requires the participants to reflect on a particular topic and tell a story that represents their own experience (Educause, 2007; Gubrium, Krause & Jernigan, 2014). We wanted the students to identify and articulate what care means to them professionally, and where those ideas come from. As we found out, most hadn't thought about the topic before. Digital storytelling was an excellent tool for the students to explore and share their understandings. The process allowed for creative self-expression and self-representation, which is an important part of establishing identity (Educause, 2007). As

soon-to-be graduates entering their perspective fields, this supported their development of professional self-awareness.

The Workshop Experience

In order to gain a greater understanding of the process, we also participated in an online digital storytelling workshop through the *California Center for Digital Story Telling*. This professional learning opportunity afforded us the familiarity of writing and producing a story about what care means to us. Participating online was challenging, but also confirmed our beliefs that learning and taking part in a group was beneficial. This supported our methodological approach in terms of facilitating a digital storytelling workshop for participants.

Participation in our own process evoked some other ethical ‘dilemmas’ or at least questions about how we should proceed with the study. We had discovered that an interpretation of care typically comes with a ‘back story’ or personal experience, so we would need to think about how personal information was shared and the potential of putting students in vulnerable positions. The other element we discovered through this workshop process was how time and thought consuming this practice could be. We recognized that students would need time for idea exploration and reflection, but also understood the need for the stories to be completed over a weekend due to their busy last semester commitments.

In Child and Youth Care (CYC) practice, the relationship is key to achieving positive outcomes (Harder, Knorth & Kalverboer, 2012). This is also true in an educational context, where emotional connections between teachers and students build trust and allow for the construction of new knowledge (Noddings, 1995). Relational practice also enhances student competence, as people want to do their best for those for whom they care (ibid). Connecting with student participants for the project was, therefore, not difficult. We advertised and quickly found five, strong, 4th year students who were in the last semester of their degree and who readily gave up an entire weekend (plus) to be part of our study. We had taught them all and believed that they would have interesting perspectives to share. And while we celebrated the fact that these were our participants, we both suspected that our relationships with these students had influenced them to take part. Being faculty members, we were in positions of power and we wanted to ensure that we did not influence their thinking, the process or the product. We decided that it would be best to hire a workshop facilitator who had the technical experience along with some emotional and professional distance from the students.

The workshop took place over an intensive three-day period:

[The] workshop [begins] with no technology in the room. A storytelling circle is the first activity – it is a place where participants have a chance to share their personal stories, develop story ideas, and receive feedback and support from the group. Next, participants begin working on a concise script. With facilitator support, each participant finds the essence of her or his particular story, and records their completed script in their own voice. Then, like a directory, each participant creates a storyboard, planning the visual and audio elements. Participants can gather existing materials from their lives, such as family photos, artwork or music. They also have the opportunity to create original content during custom photography, video and audio shoot. The workshop ends with a collective screening of the completed stories. The digital story workshop is an individual process in that each participant creates his or her own story, but it is also a strongly collective process. Everyone is invested in the importance of each other's story and the significance of the stories as a collection (Community Story Strategies, 2016, p.1).

We collaborated with the facilitator to ensure the research questions were being addressed, but did not join the group for the development of their stories. To help create a sense of community, we made ourselves available to the students and provided food throughout the weekend. At the end of the three days, we participated in the final sharing of the stories.

Interpretations of Care

The analysis of the stories was driven by the students during a video-taped focus group and audio recorded, semi-structured individual interviews. This active interview method (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995) produced rich interpretations that were full of reflection about practice and experience (Janesick, 1994). This interactive process allowed us to gain insight into the participants' perspectives and created a shared understanding (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Narratives make up a substantial part of research and it is through each participant's telling of a story that details of the experience can be understood (Dean, London, Carston & Salyers, 2015). Each story was

reviewed for both content and creative development. Through this process, the students were able to identify key messages, themes and feelings they wanted to communicate.

We quickly discovered there was a range and diversity of understanding about the meaning of care in practice. Not surprisingly, the importance and value of 'relationship' was evident in all of the stories, although each took on this understanding in a different way. One participant spoke about the impact of over caring in relationships, supporting the importance of self-care. Others described care within professional relationships as a form of protection, while another looked at care from a resiliency and social justice perspective.

Protection

A predominate theme that emerged in many of the stories related to the protection, safety and well-being of the other. Interestingly, all of the stories began by relating to an earlier time in the students' lives, where they had been cared for. Each story then connected this experience to how the students cared for others. Noddings (2002) explains this phenomenon through the progression of learning to care. "We learn first what it means to be cared-for. Then, gradually, we learn both to care for and, by extension, to care about others" (Noddings, 2002, p.22).

Even the story about self-care resonated with protection, in particular of one's self. In this story, the student shared, *"I had forgotten to care about myself, not recognizing that in helping others, I forgot to care for myself ... If I am to succeed in this helping profession, I have to care about me."* Self-care is part of the curriculum in the degree and this story clearly demonstrated its importance; not only for this student, but also for the other participants in the group. As the students debriefed about the stories, most said that self-care was an aspect of care they had not really thought about. As instructors, we suspect that students underestimate the importance of self-care until they are faced with giving too much of themselves, professionally. This story reflects the transition from theory to practice in a tangible way.

Another story revolved around a young boy who was new to a situation. The student described how the child felt alone and out of place, just as she had when she first immigrated to Canada. She built a relationship with the child, protecting him until he felt comfortable to venture out with others on his own. Her acts of caring for the boy protected him from the unknown, but she also knew that eventually she had to let him go. Her care helped build his confidence and independence so that he didn't need her anymore. Yet, she still cared. The student had also found and received this protective care through family and friendships formed in her new life in Canada. She used a

beautiful analogy in her story to describe her understanding of care and its boundaries. *“Children are like waves. They will grow and move forward, and then move backwards as they need more support and move forward again. Caring then is like the shore – accepting the waves when they come and letting them go [as they grow].”*

Another story related care to protection and providing *“...equal opportunity to all children, especially vulnerable populations around the world”*. This student described her volunteer experience, teaching English to young children in Tanzania. She developed a strong relationship with one child in particular, and upon returning home, wanted to provide further educational opportunities for this child and her siblings. For this student, caring was more than actions that happened in the moment; her care extended beyond that time as she felt a responsibility to protect and care for all children. This story is an example of ‘caring about’ on the care continuum and is the foundation of social justice. Noddings (2002) cautions us that *“those who care about others in the justice sense must keep in mind that the objective is to ensure that caring actually occurs. Caring-about is empty if it does not culminate in caring relations.”* (p.23-24).

Resiliency

The theme of resilience was also present within the students’ stories. Caring has been established as one of the most critical factors in building resilience (Bernard, 1991). Three of the stories described care in relation to connecting with, supporting, encouraging and empowering children and youth through motivating messages and beliefs. One student’s story described his tenacity and care while working with a troubled youth, *“[I was] not [going] to give up on them but hold them accountable...waiting for [them to be ready] to come out and play.”* This story spoke to the understanding that care in practice means having strong expectations for the youth. The student described using *“loving detachment”* as a way to care and connect with the youth, while still maintaining expectations and personal boundaries. Establishing strong expectations helps build resilience in youth, as the student connected with the youth many years later and learned about the impact of their caring relationship.

Another student’s story was about growing up with a father who was deaf. She described an incident where her father was mocked publicly and the impact these types of injustices had upon her. She has chosen to work with children with special needs, believing her resilience and relationship with her father has instilled a passion to care for those who may be marginalized. Care in her practice comes from a very personal place that has highly influenced her career choice, protectiveness and empathetic understanding.

Impact of the Experience

There is a certain vulnerability that is exposed through the process of digital storytelling. It occurs when the storyteller moves to a place of honesty and makes his/her own connections to the topic being explored. As Martel (2005) describes, “[t]he foundation of a story is an emotional foundation. If a story does not work emotionally, it does not work at all. The emotion in question is not the point; be it love, envy or apathy, so long as it is conveyed in a convincing manner, then the story will come alive” (as cited in Hardy and Stanton, 2007, p.11).

As the students moved from trying to please us and provide the 'right' answers to the question, to honest reflection of their own experiences, we saw this vulnerability come out. The stories were moving and revealed an understanding about care that could not have been captured through an interview. In fact, in the individual interviews conducted post-workshop, the participants were asked (again) about their understandings of care in practice. To our surprise, they struggled to articulate their ideas and a few reverted back to textbook-like answers (perhaps in an effort to please us). We were then even more convinced of the power of story. We were right about at least one thing, the use of digital storytelling as a methodological tool.

Conclusion

The matter of care in work with children and youth is an important one to address. As CYCC and ELCC continue to evolve and as practitioners gain a greater understanding of the work in these fields it is becoming evident that, to be most effective, care involves a distinct, intentional approach, grounded in beliefs and values (Laursen & Birmingham, 2003). As seen with our participants, these beliefs and values are most often rooted in our personal experiences in childhood, but change and evolve as we gain more knowledge and experience. And thus, we consider ourselves caring people, which translates into caring practitioners as we move into professional roles. We consider care necessary for practice, yet we struggle to define what care means in this context.

Essentially, the concept of care for students can be considered "tacit knowledge"; that which we know, but cannot tell (Polanyi, 1967, as cited in Hardy, 2004). It is unconscious expertise that guides behaviour in practice and professional interaction, but has not been explored or verbalized (which is why it was difficult for the students to explain it) (Hardy 2004). This knowledge is created, in part, from personal experiences and also through academic learning in class, in relationships with others, in practicum, etc.

Once tacit knowledge is revealed or identified, one starts to think about the concept. This happened, for our participants, through the digital storytelling (Hardy, 2004). The students were more able to articulate what care is, where it comes from, and how they use it in practice. Only then is it used more productively and intentionally. Identifying tacit knowledge closes the gap between theory and practice (Hardy, 2004).

When we consider teaching about care, this is something that should be identified as a concept early on in an educational program. It is not enough that students learn about care through relationships with faculty and role modelling. Students need to have the opportunity to think about what it means, where their understandings come from and how it is applied in practice. As faculty, we need to be intentional about teaching it. In turn, our students will be intentional about caring in practice.

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Monica Pauls, MA

is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Child Studies and Social Work at Mount Royal University in Alberta, Canada. She has been working as a researcher in the social science field for over a decade and has extensive experience in project development, evaluation and policy analysis. Her research interests include youth empowerment, youth justice, community development and social change. Upon completing her Masters' degree in 2002, she worked as the Coordinator for Alberta-based Research Projects at the Canadian Research Institute for Law and the Family (CRILF). Prior to this, she worked for several years with high-risk youth in children's institutions and community residential facilities.



Dr. Catherine Smey Carston

is an Associate Professor, past chair of the Department of Child and Youth Studies and was recently appointed as Director for the Centre for Child Well Being at Mount Royal University in Calgary, Alberta. Her career span includes a variety of front line, leadership, research and teaching roles in the field of child and youth education. Catherine's doctoral studies explored the role of relationships and mentoring for new graduates and she is currently the co-lead of a team of researchers and practitioners who are exploring learning and implementation strategies for the Alberta Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum Framework.



From College to University: What I learned navigating the child and youth care curriculum

Tanita Munroe

Keywords

social justice, higher education, critical reflection, child and youth care curriculum, student experience

Introduction

In the year 2000, the number of students enrolled in higher education institutions was approximately 100 million (Benson, 2014). Education is advertised as one of the best options to create upward mobility and perhaps alleviate inequities. In theory this appears true. However, as Chang (1996) and Lee (2000) noted, the experience of post-secondary education is not universal; indeed, the experience of students of colour is strongly influenced by the teaching environment which in itself is influenced by broader social and learning outcomes. Therefore, it is important that all elements of post-secondary education examine and question structural inequalities while challenging systemic barriers. Without this the results are negative interactions and a lack of guaranteed empowerment education.

As a first generation Black immigrant student from the Caribbean I was expected, like my siblings before me, to realize empowerment and economic mobility through education. But I had to do more. I had to be better than my resident, non-Black counterparts, not only to pursue education but also to be successful at it. And so I chose to complete studies at both the college and the university level. In Canada colleges are often perceived as being less prestigious than universities so I decided to attend both institutions to benefit from the strengths each had to offer. Completing my Child and Youth Care (CYC) diploma at college afforded me the practical experience through internships that grounded my skills; while earning my CYC degree at university taught me

more about the theories attached to my profession. There were many barriers to navigate: financial, emotional and social hurdles, while enduring the demands of school. But in addition to these challenges, I also experienced another key challenge – that was the lack of critical analysis through a social justice lens.

College Bound

The college experience in Canada and in Ontario specifically, is typically advertised as goal oriented. Students who choose to attend college get specific training that helps them gain employability skills and job readiness. When I made my decision to attend post-secondary school, the debate about college versus university weighed heavily on my mind. After doing my own research I realized that not all universities were able to apply skills-based teaching in their curriculum. Therefore, I applied to and was accepted into a three-year Child and Youth Worker (CYW) program at a college in Toronto. This was my first introduction to a Canadian post-secondary education. The experience provided a solid foundation in skill-based learning while supporting my development in the field of CYC. Indeed, my college CYW education enabled me to be hired in the field before I graduated.

How do I reflect on three years of college that helped me gain employment but left me feeling dissatisfied in many areas of my learning? Post-secondary education is built on a series of assumptions: First, there is the assumption that students entering college have sufficient preparation and motivation to take advantage of scholarship and improvement opportunities within the institution. The second assumption is that the institution will provide these opportunities along with providing the optimal learning environment for students to maximize their fullest potential.

My experience of college CYC education, however, could be compared to a manufacturing production line, wherein students are the products being developed for eventual distribution to their destinations. As I navigated the courses, I realized that key things were missing from our course outlines each semester. Routinely I would examine the list of prescribed literature and topics that had been prudently selected by faculty only to find many gaps in critical theory. In my view, this is what conformity felt and looked like: the passive immersion of carefully chosen knowledge passed on to students.

Many of my classmates, expressed surprise when learning that critical youth work existed at the college level (I heard about it being done at other college campuses). Unfortunately, the college focus on making students 'job ready' means that these programs often lack a critical social justice lens content. For example, in my experience,

anti-Black racism, decolonization, and Indigenous history/teachings were non-existent. They were not a pedagogical priority; within my college academic career, there was no single course pertaining to diversity. I struggled as I failed to come across critical education in my required course readings or textbooks. I found this alarming, given the over representation of Black and Indigenous youth in the Child Welfare System in Canada and, more significantly, in Ontario.

My experience with child and youth work at college consisted of courses where evaluation and content involved multiple choice short answers, and dated information from books that were discontinued and videos or clips that were nearly a decade old. As a result, students were never given the tools to develop the capacity for critical inquiry that would be useful over our lifetime. If questions or arguments were raised; for example, *why are indigenous youth overrepresented in child welfare?* The answers were often vague. Important social justice issues were not given the attention needed to enable students to deconstruct the historical and current atrocities that rendered Indigenous peoples 'at risk' up to today. The result is that CYW diploma education gives students skills but not the critical analytic framework needed to build authentic relationships with individuals whose life experiences have been typically marginalized. How then can diploma graduates grasp the concept of recognizing that we have the power of making meaningful and positive changes if the process was not offered?

My experience with the teaching faculty at college echoed the lack of social justice. Although I am only familiar with one CYW diploma program and acknowledge there may be those who teach from a critical pedagogy, I did not encounter this type of teaching in my experience. I had hoped classroom practices would have created a critical space for enabling emerging practitioners to understand how we can become agents of change in the lives of youth who have been taught by experience not to trust 'the system'. There was a need for students to be given opportunities to discuss these and other challenges ourselves. If the college classroom experience has been designed to prepare and equip students with the skills and tools necessary to engage in our chosen profession, then the idea of exploring social justice should not be an 'add on' but rather embedded in every CYC course. Colleges CYW programs need to encourage students to think critically about the society in which we live, and welcome challenges to all social norms and systemic processes. Learning is at its most meaningful and useful when everyone in the classroom, teacher and students, recognize they are responsible for creating a learning community together (Bell Hooks, 1994).

This was not my experience with the CYW diploma curriculum. Disappointingly, the teaching was prescribed and felt routine and repetitive, producing robotic graduates shaped to fit a privileged view of CYC practice. Teaching methods were more akin to stimulus and response experience designed to ensure students got what they needed to survive in the working world. Content that might have encouraged critical challenge and debate was obsolete. Unfortunately, the status quo for my college experience was a casual mention of an edited history of the populations with whom we would be in relationship, while disregarding the culture context of these individuals through the lens of social justice. My college career left me ready to work but unprepared for authentic CYC practice.

A Student Navigating University

As I reflect on my CYC university experience I recall there were many professors who stood before me without contrition to tell me I was part of something greater, that my classmates and I had the capacity to change things. We were told how privileged we were, that we were among the brightest that had been chosen. The rhetoric was used often and repeated until it is stuck in the mind of many. There was a sense that the university culture held itself above that of the college. I was told that now I was here opportunity abounded, for those who wanted to pursue it. While I may agree with the notion in theory, for me, that was not the experience for many students of color who struggled to navigate the university system.

It is noteworthy to observe the assumption by those with privilege and power that access to opportunity is merely a factor of student motivation. My experience as a student of colour is the systemic belief that education is the avenue through which Blacks, and other minorities should navigate the world, from being deprived (socially) and isolated (marginalized) to being accepted by society as they aspire to economic efficiency and inclusion. As a Black student the barriers I faced were often as tall as the structures that house the path to our success; from contemplating finances to interfacing with institutional stereotyping, and needing to master not just curriculum content but also needing to respond to the injustice of what is often a systemically privileged learning environment.

As I weaved my way through both college and university life, I recognized there was a commonality between both institutions: they both taught from a multicultural perspective which hid the real issues of equality. Multiculturalism advocates tolerance, but tolerance by itself will continue to replicate existing power inequalities, as witness when certain

forms of knowledge and points of view are acknowledged and rewarded by academic gatekeepers as more legitimate than others (Gillborn, 2006). With few exceptions most CYC teaching faculty are cis-gendered white men and white women who could not connect with me. I went from class to class questioning the lack of critical awareness from my professors and pondered at times if course content was purposefully glossed over in order not to upset the status quo of the classroom environment.

Uncomfortable conversations can be the catalyst for knowledge creation and learning; but these conversations take time and effort – they require risk as faculty and students are forced to manage analytical tensions and intellectual classroom conflicts. I observed that these types of difficult conversations are the essence of CYC. They highlight rather than ignore important issues. As a student I was taught, the importance of 'being there' for the youths rather than understanding the systemic and root causes of 'how' we got there. In CYC education the concept of CYC practice seems to be stuck in the realm of relationships with youths – believing that aspects of troubled lives can be fixed only after establishing this relationship. This is a deficiency in CYC education. If students are not challenged to understand the larger context of their work, and to understand their work through the lens of social justice, then there is little hope of them being able to develop critical forms of practice with young people in their situations (Bamber & Murphy, 1999). In addition, a lack of critical theory perpetuates inequality and does not tackle deep-rooted systemic issues. This deficiency in CYC education is also a risk that graduates become practitioners who are positioned to blame youth for their oppression and question why they are marginalized.

It is interesting that while the CYC profession seems to continuously press forward, the CYC education and the quality of the dialogue in the classroom is disappointing and at times stagnant. VanderVen, Mattingly & Morris (1982) point to barriers between colleges and universities, such as curriculum structure and content, the degree to which faculty is connected to community programs, and the realities of practice settings. There appears to be a disconnection between the applied learning focus of CYC diploma education, and the theoretical aspirations of CYC degree programs. When theory dominates practice, or practice dominates theory there is not only a constant danger of reinventing the wheel, but also of never advancing theory and therefore never advancing practice (Hall, Lumley & McLennan, 1978).

During my university experience, I felt disappointed and limited by the range of solutions, potential outcomes and options addressed only through the relational lens. There is more – a deeper need for CYC educators to challenge students to contextualize

the work and themselves. It is important for CYC educators to fully understand the part they play in ensuring that students become critical thinkers. There can be no critical practice without critical practitioners. It is a question of 'know-how' where critical purpose is both clear and embodied in the processes of the work itself (Bamber & Murphy, 1999). CYC educators have a duty to prepare students for practice by ensuring that students have more than 'skills'. This requires balancing the critical thought and challenges to personal beliefs with support. In CYC education it is really important to push students out of their comfort zone, but then also to demonstrate ways to support growth of self when students find themselves in a place of discomfort. Learning to become a CYC practitioner cannot be risk averse.

CYC Educators

In my university career, there was one professor who represented me as a Black woman. CYC programs need to examine their hiring practices. It is important to have knowledgeable Black professors who can speak to students from diverse cultural backgrounds. This was clearly an equity and representation issue that surfaced in the academic space I occupied. There were professors who attempted to create dialogue about critical issues and focus on the underrepresentation and oppression in our field. In most cases these professors were persons of color or part-time faculty. I paid close attention to the faces and attitudes of privileged students and their reaction to the raising of issues of social inequality. These critical discussions were often met with academic questions of validity and deliberate disengagement from students of privilege.

I realize now that the majority of CYC educators as white men and women teach from a framework that does not address or acknowledge the realities of marginalized and oppressed youth. As a mature student who had a career in the field, I found myself exposed to concepts that were too thin and filled with holes unable to keep my soul warm. I tried to convince myself that there had to be more; it became a complex process. At times I felt cheated by institutions of higher education. I yearned for the critical pedagogical view, which would have enabled me to learn about ways to create agency among young people. Unfortunately, my experience with CYC educational pedagogy was that I felt stuck in Perry's (1968) first stage of intellectual development. When I sought more, I became frustrated questioned the validity of the course.

Friere (2000) suggests it is through learning that people can either come to accept the status quo or lead to the development of the critical lens needed to make changes where they see fit. In my own experience, when I tried to dig deeper and apply that critical

lens the systemic responses were the same. Bamber & Murphy (1999) point out that workers with no conception of critical practice will be unable to work through the full process with young people. Allowing students the autonomy and time to grow, share and ask critical questions may sound far-reaching, but it is simply the right thing to do. Thus, CYC education needs to push students to explore how they feel and require them to develop theories that 'explain' things; in short: meaning making that is contextual and just.

If critical practice is to become part of the CYC curriculum, there is a need to rethink the key concepts of power, purpose and learning in a way which links personal troubles to social issues (Bamber & Murphy, 1999). The effective professional execution of a CYC curriculum requires that educators deal with open-ended problems that are fraught with significant and enduring uncertainties about pressing issues. In my experience I observed that many CYC educators are not readily able to address these challenges – or at least are not prepared to respond to these challenges in a way that is congruent with the ethos of CYC practice. I would hear the same rhetoric at times far too often: "Class we will have to move on from this so we can cover the rest of the content for today". Critical forms of practice seek not only to explain oppression but also to challenge it. The learning resulting from actual challenge informs the developing theory. Inviting debate around solutions may be hard to fit into a timetable, but it is surely more important than dated textbooks or examples of situations with which students like myself simply cannot identify.

The Here and Now

This reflection intended to question structural inequalities while challenging systemic barriers in CYC education. Obviously my lens was personal, but it is hoped that within CYC the personal is relevant and respected. My experience with CYC education reveals that social justice is missing from both the content and the practice of CYC education. There is a need for CYC educators to consider their own level of discomfort, as there is a need for CYC students to be supported and challenged to unpack their privileges. Further, there is a need for CYC education to examine its own uncomfortable relationship with academia and the outright absence of social justice within academic institutional organization and culture. It should be noted that post-secondary CYC curricula do provide valuable skills and theoretical knowledge that I now use and appreciate. However as a practitioner, and as the profession matures and evolves, social justice work will become a necessary tool. CYC educators need to align the relationship between theory and practice, professional

training and critical anti oppressive work. Current CYC education, with its almost exclusive focus on relational practice, is no longer sufficient. Relational curricula as evident in CYC college and university programs in Ontario provide graduates with a core skill and opportunity to work with youth and their families. However, it ill prepares them for the realities of working in context. The long term result of this educational deficiency will be the continuation of systemic privilege and the continued support of a paternal care system built on colonial values. It is crucial that CYC educators, students and youth who are engaged in care all reflect and seek ways to collaborate; to examine historic and contemporary social privilege and power (Sleeter, 1995). Preparing for relational practice can no longer be limited to a privileged understanding of the concept of relationship. We need to position our preparation for practice within the lived realities of the work itself.

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Tanita Munroe

has been dedicated to empowering and working with youth for over 20 years. She completed her Child and Youth Care diploma at George Brown College and is currently in her final year at Ryerson University in the Child and Youth Care program. Tanitia works as a child and youth worker at the Toronto District School Board and also within the Youth Criminal Justice system. She currently serves as a board member of the Faculty of Community Service Program's Advisory Committee at George Brown College. When Tanitia is not advocating for social justice and equity for youth, she is parenting two teenagers and creating culturally creative social justice apparel.



Decreasing the Gaps of Education and Skills of Child and Youth Care Workers

Shawn Wood

Keywords

Accreditation; certification; education; CYC profession; regulation; evaluation

In this paper, I will be discussing the benefits of certification and accreditation for the child and youth care (CYC) profession. In addition, I will look at the current educational cost and length of studies for some of the CYC programs over Canada.

Accreditation is defined as “official certification that a school or course has met standards set by external regulators” (Oxford Dictionary, n.d.). In other words, accreditation helps to regulate and fosters change within colleges and universities to provide the best possible outcomes for their students. This is achieved by regulating the curriculum of all colleges and universities and creates a standard that meets the accreditation benchmarks. The Child and Youth Care Education Accreditation Board's (CYCEAB, <http://www.cycaccreditation.ca>) definition of accreditation is as follows: *“Accreditation in CYC is intended to help post-secondary CYC diploma and degree programs focus attention on accountability to children, youth, and families, accountability to students, and accountability to each other, that is, to the community of CYC professionals and educators”* (CYCEAB, 2006). The main objective of the CYCEAB is to provide accountability to practitioners and educators and to have a standard education, knowledge and ability in all post-secondary CYC studies.

The CYCEAB's goals are to help CYC programs across Canada articulate and measure their learning outcomes as relevant to CYC practice. In this way CYCEAB accreditation will serve not only as a measure of an educational standard, but it will also create a way to evaluate graduate preparation for practice with children and their families. The activities of the CYCEAB and its CYC program members across Canada then seek not only to have

an impact on education, but also to build and provide the community of care practitioners an avenue to promote and share resources. Across Canada, there are 50 publicly funded post-secondary institutions and eight private colleges registered under Career Colleges Canada that offer CYC education across Canada (Career Colleges Canada, 2015). These programs range from eight-month college certification to university doctoral degrees. There are approximately 12 years difference in the education and training between these two programs; and a variety of opportunities in between on the road to becoming and earning a professional designation as a Child and Youth Care Worker (CYCW). The question then must be: can programs of different lengths, with different learning outcomes all prepare students to meet the same professional standards? Does the completion of an eight-month certificate program provide the same competencies, training and theoretical framework compared to that of a two year diploma, or a four year undergraduate degree, masters and so forth? There is an assumption that most students completing their Master's or Doctoral degree will most likely work in education, or policy development, and are unlikely to work in the frontline in, for instance, a group home, health care, treatment facilities or a department of community services. However, the differences between a two year, three year and four year program are less clear, and suggest we need not only to articulate these differences, but also need to begin to address the potential gaps in CYC education. Personally, I believe there are differences between various credentials, and do not see how each of these programs could provide the same level of education, theory and practice needed to work with our vulnerable populations. Perhaps we can look to an accreditation process to help us articulate the knowledge, field experience and practice standards needed to work on the frontline and then to help educational institutions to bridge the gaps between theory and practice. Accreditation has the potential to make educational institutes accountable to the profession by creating and teaching so that learning outcomes are related to professional practice requirements, thus bringing clarity and pathways between various CYC credentials and programs with similar educational intentions.

As proud CYCWs we need to advocate and promote CYC as a professional practice. I argue that the first step is to ensure that everyone who enters the field does so only after meeting a recognized standard of educational competencies. "Many professional disciplines, such as nursing, education, medicine, engineering, social work, law, and health services have created standards and review processes with the intention to ensure professionals entering those fields have attained educational competence" (CYCEAB, 2015). Currently this year there are 18 members of the CYCEAB. In the fall of 2016 five of

those member institutions will participate in the first cycle of CYC educational accreditation in Canada. The CYCEAB is paving the way for our future as a profession by supporting colleges and university CYC programs to demonstrate that their graduates have attained a recognized standard of educational competency. Now it is our job within the profession to adopt hiring policies that acknowledge these standards, and to continue to advocate for change by challenging programs that are not accredited through CYCEAB.

Although education in CYC may begin with post-secondary training and accreditation, education is not the exclusive domain of educational institutions. “In May 2007 in North America, the Association for Child and Youth Care Practice (ACYCP) organized the Child and Youth Care Certification Board (CYCCB), an independent non-profit corporation, to oversee the implementation and further development of professional credentialing” (CYCCB, 2010, p. 4). In 2010, after three years of study, the CYCCB identified five core competencies and nearly one hundred discrete knowledge and skill outcomes required for professional Child and Youth Practitioners (CYCPs). The identified five core competencies: Professionalism, Applied Human Development Relationship, Communication, Developmental Practice Methods and Culture and Human Diversity are considered essential to CYC practice, and serve as requirements for the professional certification needed not only to enter but also to remain in professional CYC practice. Organizing competencies in domains allows not only the CYCCB, but also CYCPs to measure, test and observe the skills needed to certify as a CYCP. In addition, certification helps the individual, organizations, and the CYCCB to identify areas where improvement is needed and excellence is occurring, demonstrating that CYC education should not, and does not remain the sole responsibility of colleges and universities.

The CYCCB requirement to maintain certification is ongoing training, education and skills development. In order to measure the knowledge and skills of practitioners, the CYCCB has created a formal process of certification followed by ongoing professional development. The process is divided into sections beginning with an examination consisting of multiple choice questions, and including the evaluation of a professional portfolio, eight essays, supervisory assessment, two references, work experience and educational standards (CYCCB, 2016).

The CYCCB certification process has been adopted by several provincial CYC organizations in Canada, thereby creating a more consistent and transferable way of supporting CYC professional practice and education. In doing so, it promotes ongoing learning and recognizes the importance of formal pre-professional education, along with

practice wisdom. In this way the CYCCB has also created a benchmark for employees to promote the best outcomes for children and their families.

Both accreditation and certification contribute to quality assurance when being with and caring for children, youth and their families. Educational institutes and individuals participating in these processes become part of a process of self-regulation. This is needed to advance our profession through accountability and a commitment to our own continued training and education; it sets minimal standards and a guiding code of ethics for practice.

In this short article my intention was to provoke conversation about CYC education – specifically drawing attention to the variety and differences between universities, colleges, and private institutes that offer CYC studies across Canada. This conversation has strengthened my assumption that, although we can be proud of our diversity, there is a need for clearly defined outcomes linked to practice that differentiate between programs of different lengths, credentials and outcomes and that these differences need to be linked to entry into CYC professional practice. Currently this does not exist. There are no learning outcome standards, nor standards related to length of study in CYC education, nor differentiation within professional practice between various credentials, nor standardization of the costs associated with certificate, diploma, undergraduate degree, or graduate degrees in CYC. In Canada, this can be confusing to those entering the field, as it is a saturated profession, filled not only with hiring and responsibility variations which are not consistent with years of education, credential, or curriculum but also inconsistent with regard to the specificity of a CYC credential needed for practice as opposed to a general social service designation or general Bachelor of Arts degree. This is a further example of a problematic system highlighting the inconsistencies of how we measure CYC practice and education.

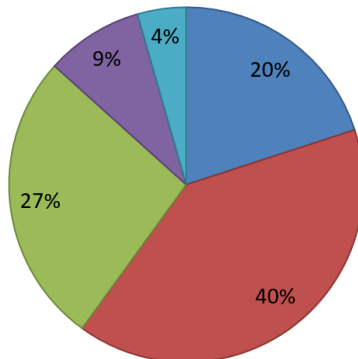
As we work to ensure and assure the quality of CYC practice, we need to continually advocate for higher educational standards. Our focus on achieving this goal should be to continue to support the work of accreditation bodies, such as the CYCEAB, working collaboratively with educational institutions and practitioners in order that systems are developed nationally to promote the best possible outcomes for students, so that the public benefit from the services and care we provide. Although educational accreditation and professional certification are two different processes, we need to work with both of these systems to ensure that professional education is integral to ongoing CYC practice. We also need to ensure that neither accreditation nor certification become instruments of power and privilege, but rather both processes are congruent with the ethos of CYC

relational practice – working with and not doing to or for practitioners. As a practitioner I am looking to accreditation and certification to be processes that create, support and evaluate benchmarks for the skills needed to work in CYC Practice. Finally, both accreditation and certification need to be self-regulating bodies that foster and adhere to a code of ethics promoting ongoing training, reflection and learning. Accreditation and certification in CYC education have the potential to protect the public from uneducated, under prepared and unskilled workers masquerading as CYC practitioners and the potential of challenging our profession to hold ourselves accountable for our practice, and our impact.

The average Child and Youth Care educational standards offered across Canada

Schools

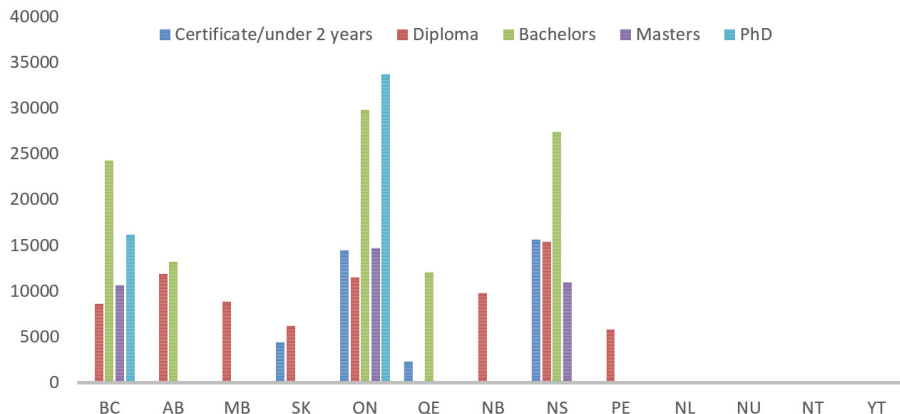
■ Certificate/diploma under 1 year ■ Diploma (2+ years) ■ Undergraduate ■ Masters ■ PhD



Average cost of education for Child and Youth Care Programs offered across Canada

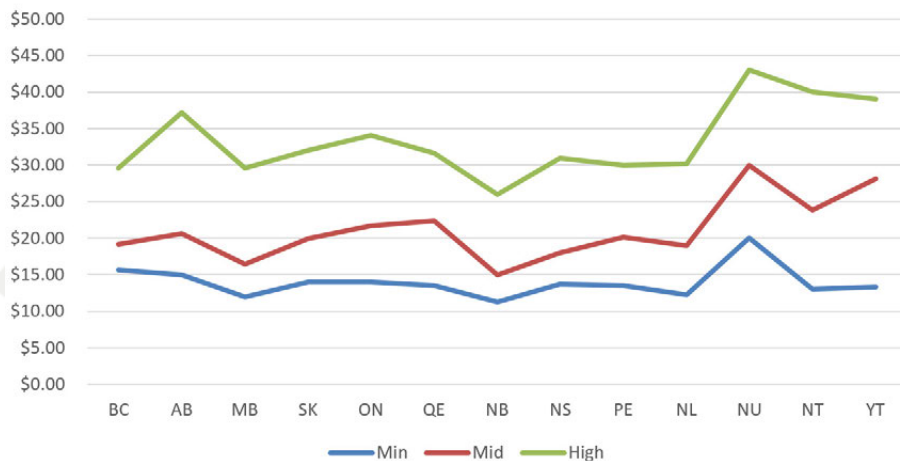
(Not a full list, but samples across Canada)

AVERAGE COST OF CYC EDUCATION



Average wages of Child and Youth Care across Canada (Stats Canada)

Average Wages Across Canada



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Shawn Wood

is a Child and Youth Care Practitioner who has been working in the mental health and addictions field for ten years. He recently graduated with a Bachelors of Social Work at University of Manitoba and has been working on his Masters of Social Work at University of Waterloo. Currently he is a certified child and youth care practitioner at the IWK children's hospital in Halifax NS. Shawn has a broad range of professional experiences, such as working with at-risk youth in Toronto, and assisting the homeless population, mental health and addiction, educating organizations on LGBT+ issues, advocacy and professional development across Nova Scotia.



Five things I learned in my first year of teaching Child and Youth Care

Jaspreet Bal

My name is Jaspreet: I survived my first year as a professor of Child & Youth Care (CYC). Here is some of my back story: I came straight out of my PhD and into teaching full time in CYC at Humber College in Ontario, Canada. Before teaching full time I had done all the separate parts of teaching (designing outlines, marking, lecturing), but I had never, start to finish, taught an entire set of courses. I was sure full time teaching would be no more than the combination of all my past experiences; I couldn't have been more wrong. The year of teaching that followed taught me more about myself, the post-secondary system, and the CYC profession than I ever could have imagined. I learned that I am not as good as I thought at certain things, and that I am infinitely more resilient than I give myself credit for. What I have put together here are five of the biggest realisations I had over my first year of teaching. This is by no means an exhaustive list. It is probably not even news for those wise souls who have been teaching in CYC for many years. This is simply a humble account of the things I found most intriguing about my first year of teaching in CYC. Some of them are about teaching in general, some of them are about CYC, but all of them are things I did not know a year ago.

You can't control everything!

I am a classic over achieving middle child and a total Hermione. Throughout my educational journey I easily controlled my time, my world and my school work. Coming face to face with the sheer lack of control that came with teaching was a shock to my system; one that took way too long to process and I still have trouble accepting.

Every week I spent countless hours preparing for classes and planned everything in my head down to the last minute. In some classes I didn't get to do everything I had wanted and a few classes were woefully short. I found teaching to be part improve, part stand up, part TED talk, part coaching, part mentoring and part counselling. Every day was new and exhausting. I never knew how a class was going to turn out. I could present the same lecture to two different sections and have two totally different results.

I learned that half of the process of transferring knowledge and skills to students was my effort and the other half was the student and what they brought to the experience; as someone who needs to control everything this terrified me. There is no guarantee that what you teach will be learned in the way it was intended.

Self-Care is preached but not practiced

When I started my post-secondary education, there was much talk about the “freshman fifteen”. Students were cautioned about the seemingly inevitable weight gain and drop in marks that came with all of the challenges of making it as a first year student. Surprisingly, there was no such warning for my first year of teaching. I had a lot of support and encouragement from colleagues about how hard the first year would be, but my robust denial and self-preservation instinct lead me to believe I was fine. Without admitting it, I went a year without physical activity and a steady diet of chocolate covered peanuts. A once proud vegan and martial artist, I became a sedentary person whose entire goal was not falling behind on marking. Everything, and I mean everything else, became secondary and disposable. I gave up sleep, friendships, playing music, and watching movies. I did math in my head that convinced me that if I gave up my workout for the day I could mark an extra four papers. The lure of having my marking done on time dominated every decision.

At the same time, I continued to preach the CYC value of self-care. I dutifully told my students over and over again that they needed to make sure they were okay so they could be useful to other people. It wasn't until I was observing another professor teach that the hypocrisy of it all fell into place. This professor mentioned in her class that plane safety demonstrations always stress that if you are travelling with those who need assistance you have to put on your own oxygen mask first and then help others. This was such a simple concept, yet it alluded me in my first year of teaching. I tried, rather fruitlessly, to push through everything without taking care of myself and put self-care onto the back burner. I see now it is not an option, or a luxury, or something to feel guilty about. Things like sleep, exercise and even quality Netflix time are priorities!

CYC education has a diversity problem

This painful reality was something that I operated in from the very moment I started teaching in CYC. My students, comprised of current and future CYC practitioners, came from a broad array of social backgrounds, races, abilities, sexualities and classes; as did the children they worked with in turn. The discord was that the full time faculty teaching CYC, in all institutions, did not reflect the populations they were training and the children

and young people that would be receiving services. This is not a reflection of the individuals that comprised the faculty. If anything they were indispensable experts in their respective subjects whose politics of allyship were strong and nuanced. However, alongside the incredible faculty, there was a constant need for people whose lived experiences reflected their students and the populations being addressed. The current dominant lens of CYC education is rich and deep but it is not wide. There is a breadth of voices being left out of the classroom when the creation and transfer of knowledge is in the hands of few and similar people.

The encouraging thing was that CYC educators were aware of the lack of diversity and were having much needed conversations. The lack of diversity was never the elephant in the room and, like me, other faculty members were similarly struggling with and benefiting from, a post-secondary system that systemically kept out diverse educators. The process of trying to include different voices into CYC education is going to be long and complicated but it is, at the very least, an overt goal.

Teaching is doing!

“Those who can’t do, teach”

The number of times I heard some version of that comment over the past year was exhausting. I have yet to come up with some witty passive aggressive comment that neatly summarizes how off the mark that remark is!

If teaching is not doing, then I don’t know how to account for the last year. I have never done so much “doing” in my life. Regardless of the content I was teaching, one of my larger goals was always to make sure my students could account for all their social positions and place themselves in a context and relationship with the children they would be working with. I found myself teaching in a moment where information was readily available, plentiful, and quite literally at my students’ fingertips. I saw myself as not simply transferring information, but rather a set of life skills. I wanted my students to see their own historical moment, their race, their gender, and all with the idea that these things are fluid and socially constructed. That kind of conceptually moving work required creativity and energy, and I definitely saw it as activism. I understood that if I had a captive audience for fourteen weeks, I wanted to be able to do something transformative with that time. I never gave up a chance to use relationships, narratives and content to talk about social justice and make my students the right amount of uncomfortable.

Teaching Child and Youth Care Practice *is* Child and Youth Care Practice

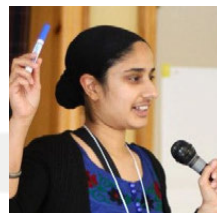
This journey of discovering the CYC identity was one of the greatest learning experiences of the past year. I will fully admit that I did not come into CYC teaching as a CYC practitioner. My background was in Child and Youth Studies and Cultural Studies. I now see that I had a lot of cross over with CYC work but I in no way understood the depth of content that makes up the CYC identity.

What I see is a profession with a rich history that is struggling to define itself to stay competitive while allowing for the fluidity that it needs to keep being effective. I simultaneously appreciate, and am frustrated by, the lack of definitive identity of CYC. There is a common understanding of values and the openness to engage with and challenge the CYC role. As I retroactively take on the CYC identity from the position of an educator, I am seeing how much of what I am teaching my students is being put into practice in my own teaching. Every class, every interaction, every meeting is an opportunity to put into action the principles of CYC.

As I write this I am weeks away from starting my second year. I am trained as a Muay Thai fighter. You fight a round, have a 30 second break and then go in for another round. This summer has felt like that 30 seconds between rounds. You breathe, wipe the sweat out of your eyes and walk back into the ring with your head held high. I am excited about what comes this year and I feel far better prepared. I own my mistakes and I realise that I am going to keep making them every year. The adrenaline has kept me from remembering the pain of the first round and I am motivated to keep engaging with the wonderful world of CYC education.

Dr. Jaspreet Bal

is a Professor in the Child and Youth Care program at Humber College in Toronto. She completed her PhD in Cultural Studies from Queen's University in Kingston Ontario, where she focused on children's rights, education, and returned for fieldwork to her ancestral village in Punjab. She looked at the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child and how as a universalised text it has disparate applications depending on whether a society is textually mediated or not. Bal serves on the Board of Directors of the Sikh Feminist Research Institute and Kaurs United International.



Child and Youth Care Educational Congruency to Assist Competency Development in the area of Personal Development and Self-Care

Charlene Pickrem

Keywords

*educational congruency, students, personal development, self-care practice,
emotional well-being*

In 1991, I entered the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) Correctional Workers program believing the education would provide me an opportunity to work with teens struggling to fit into society. I was not aware of the Child and Youth Care (CYC) field nor was there a CYC program available at the NSCC. After completing a placement at the Halifax Correctional Centre I was struggling with my career choice. My instructor, Peggy Joiner, suggested I complete a practicum with the Association for the Development of Children's Residential Facilities, currently HomeBridge Youth Society. Reigh Allen, the supervisor at the time, saw potential in me and hired me to join the Jubien House team on a casual contract. I was not fully aware of vicarious trauma, burnout or compassion fatigue nor was I aware of self-care practices until a decade later when I attended a Provincial CYC Conference where Mike Holton presented a workshop addressing these issues. At that time, I was already experiencing all three of these 'costs of caring' symptoms, and had through therapy sought to rebuild my confidence after joining a new team and program.

At this time, the field of CYC was becoming more aligned with relationship based approaches rather than behavior modification techniques. I struggled to connect, as I did not feel safe with my emotions while I tried to adjust my approach and practice. I resisted the changing culture of the field as I found comfort in the structure of behavior

modification. I perceived I could not perform my duties as a Child and Youth Care Worker/Practitioner (CYCW/CYCP) without the negative consequences of the costs of caring. I decided to continue my education by taking the Masters in Child and Youth Study program at Mount Saint Vincent University. My goal? To find out why.

My graduate thesis investigated the effects of occupational burnout. My focus was to identify the variables that influenced the experience of job related stress, along with an investigation of interventions and potential prevention strategies. When I completed my final thesis presentation in January 2015, my secondary advisor asked me three times consecutively, "Why did you choose this topic?" I stuck to the claim "I wanted answers." I later realized that, although I did want answers, I was also searching for conclusions to allow me the ability to externalize my own problem, a bias I did not note or recognize in my thesis work.

What did I learn from the research? I learned it has been argued that holistic preventative approaches might assist early recognition and action as one's job, organization and personal characteristics affect how one experiences stress (Decker, Bailey, & Westergaard, 2002; Maslach, 1979). I learned that organizations can assist individuals in avoiding burnout symptoms by supporting employees to experience balanced workloads, feelings of control in decision making, appropriate rewards for work done, fairness among employee management relations, and fostering similar values and a sense of community (Maslach & Goldberg, 1998; Raiger, 2005). Reflecting on my own experience, I realized professional mystique had led me to feel as if I was failing in my CYC duties. I had been making decisions daily regarding the care of the youth and facility, I was compensated well, I shared similar values, and I had felt connected to the team. Although the organization was providing prevention and management strategies to assist me to avoid burnout later in my career I was already experiencing the symptoms of vicarious trauma, burnout and thus compassion fatigue. What did this mean?

Job stress leading to burnout has been proven to affect the psychological, emotional, and physical well-being of human service employees, organizations' economic status, and those in care (Pickrem, 2015). Physical illness and mental health issues can be costs to individuals who provide care to others, with resulting increases to organizational overhead, and reductions of best practices (Barford & Whelton, 2010; Maslach, Sachaufeli, Leiter, 2001). It is clear that prolonged exposure to stressful job environments erodes the psychological defenses used for coping and adapting (Raider, 1989). Individuals may begin to experience emotional exhaustion, a lack of satisfaction with work and/or cynical perspectives regarding clientele, if coping strategies are not

implemented and practiced (Seti, 2007; Zellmer, 2008). Although funding challenges may make it difficult, it is not impossible to offer employees training and support to cope with the emotional impacts of the job. The key seems to be finding ways to educate CYC organizations and employees on coping strategies and/or interventions to prevent or respond to burn out symptoms. Organizations, educators, and individuals need to invest in self-efficacy in order to create a healthier culture leading to decreased burnout.

The knowledge I attained in my graduate studies suggested that my own psychological defenses were no longer effective in assisting me to cope and adapt with the stress I was experiencing. I had my first panic attack hours after a team meeting. A fellow team member shared information on a few of our former residents. The atmosphere was relaxed and I did not have my emotional shield up. My colleague informed me that former residents were involved in an underage sex trade ring – a trigger for me. I made it through the team meeting and found my way home. I tried to ignore acknowledging the feelings this information was having on me. I cleaned the house until my partner arrived home. As I briefly shared the story the rhythm of my speech indicated I was struggling and had not found the release I needed. I suggested I call a friend and fellow CYCW (and encouraged to do so by my partner, who is a faithful support but recognized that I needed someone who knew the context).

When I called and requested support, my colleague responded immediately and we agreed to meet. As I began to walk I was acutely aware of my internal organs. They were shaking. By the time we met my teeth were chattering, despite my attempts to clench my jaw and maintain control. As we hugged I started to cry. I was unable to avoid the emotions surfacing: intense guilt, a sense of failure, lack of control, and a lack of purpose. I could not fathom why we do what we do. I was unable to stop shaking, crying or talking as we walked the neighborhood streets. My friend kept pace, reminding me to breathe, and listened, providing safety, understanding, and positive words. I felt defeated, lost, and later acutely aware that my emotional intelligence needed further development. I once again entered therapy to discuss years of repressed emotion.

I do not want, in any way; to indicate that burnout is caused by individual characteristics. I believe the experience of burnout needs to be examined holistically. In my research I had examined the organizational structures that may have affected my experience, but it was not until after completing my research that I realized I also needed to look within myself. This observation has significant implications for CYC education. What is the connection between objective student research and the student's lived experience or emotional vulnerability? How should or could CYC faculty challenge and

support CYC students as they work with material that may be personally triggering, or traumatizing? Should CYC educational programs also consider and strive to implement practices that prevent burn out symptoms? Do CYC programs actually support and engage in the practice of self-care, or is this merely a topic discussed in theory?

Personality characteristics do play a role in how one copes with stress. I had exhibited neuroticism characterized by depression, anxiety or hypochondria, as well as low self-esteem, and extroversion – all individual variables linked to all three burnout dimensions (Barford & Whelton, 2010; Maslach *et al.*, 2001). In this situation I believe I lacked the ability to express, identify, understand and adapt to the feelings I was experiencing, suggesting low levels of emotional intelligence. I was placing unique pressures on others and myself perhaps due to my naïve view of job expectations and client outcomes. I set myself up to fail, which led to thoughts of criticism and feelings of shame. Twisted thinking took me further and I became depressed. Due to being unaware of the costs of caring and the fear (stigma) of being judged, I did not seek support proactively early in my career. The concern of others made me react. When I began to notice twisted thinking taking over my thoughts and feelings I sought help and felt proud doing so. I was unaware of the risks caring for others can present until the damage had been done. I continue to wonder how CYC educators can better understand this belief as endemic to many CYC graduates.

Fortunately, I have continued to reflect and have learned compassion for self. I no longer wish to blame anyone but rather to educate and support others. I have learned to live with the symptoms, accepted ‘where I am at’ in life and have made new goals that support my wellbeing. I am fortunate to have a great support system due to acknowledging and allowing myself to feel vulnerable. Could I have learned this earlier in my education?

Human service workers appear to experience burn out differently than other service sector employees. The empathetic approach needed during direct contact with clients is exceedingly demanding psychologically and emotionally (Barford and Whelton, 2010). One’s sense of safety, trust, esteem, intimacy and control are psychological areas impacted by vicarious trauma alone (Baird & Kracen, 2006). I do not know exactly how many youth I engaged with in their life-space, but I estimate that it is close to two hundred, most of whom I have not had contact with once they left the facility. Unfortunately, it seems that only the youth who remain in the system are heard about and in a negative way. The impact of this pattern is often neglected in CYC education.

It was not until I entered graduate school and began teaching as a CYC instructor that I had the opportunity to share the knowledge on vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue and burn out, and experience myself in a new context. This integrated learning provided

me the opportunity to expand my awareness and therefore my growth as well. As care providers we need to look after self to effectively look after others, to learn and to accept that as individuals we are worthy. It is not selfish to look after self; to do so is necessary to be well. Self-care is time-consuming work requiring support. I believe it is difficult to 'teach' this self-acceptance within regular classroom or professional training, as it needs to be practiced with mindfulness.

Bronfenbrenner's social ecological model examines development in context and is key to understanding CYC educational programs and their impact on students' foundational learning. CYC education includes degree, advanced diploma, diploma and accelerated credentials and although these programs may share similarities, the skilled training required to cultivate competencies for professional CYCPs varies. Humber College completed a study on behalf of the CYC Education Accreditation Board (CYCEAB) "An Investigation into Field Work Models in Canadian Child and Youth Care Education" (Snell, 2016). The data indicates fieldwork required by the various programs varied by as much as a whopping 1100 hours difference. Further research needs to be undertaken to examine the congruency between CYC educational programs and our CYC competencies/practices, particularly with regard to self-care, burn out, triggers, trauma, emotional intelligence, and self-awareness. CYC education programs all include some form of fieldwork practice, but there has yet to be a study of the emotional impact, or reliability of learner outcomes, due to their fieldwork experience. Could it be that students of CYC programs, and the children, youth and families with whom they are in relationship, could be healthier if field work was considered the intersection of theory and practice relevant to burn out symptoms and the costs associated with caring.

I am concerned that, since CYC programs do not have some form of regulatory accountability and accreditation, we may be sending individuals into the life space of children, youth and families, who are not equipped with the self-awareness, knowledge, and skills needed to identify the potential cost of caring factors. These graduates may not have the self-awareness or the intervention skills to choose from when they themselves need support. If educated or supported differently during their education, these graduates may be able to make informed choices early in their professional development, which will enable them to remain healthy and effective. There are ethical issues and potential liabilities here associated with CYC education – specifically associated with fieldwork. Could it be that CYC fieldwork and CYC classroom programs do not serve the emotional well-being or safety of students; do not prepare graduates for the costs of caring. This seems to be incongruent with the core tenets of CYC practice. From the student experience, the practitioner point of

view, the educator's perspective and from my personal position, I believe CYC education is overdue for some of its own reflective practice.

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Charlene Pickrem

has over twenty years of experience as a Child and Youth Care Worker (CYCW). She has practiced in residential care, taught beginning Child and Youth Care students and done training. She has a Masters in Child and Youth Study and is certified through the CYCCB. In her Masters research she examined the effects of stress on residential Child and Youth Care Workers as experienced by vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue and burnout with hopes to increase her understanding. Her current passion is educating individuals/organizations to promote self-care, as well as, advocating for the professionalization of the field by advocating for Child and Youth Care (CYC) educational congruence with CYC practices.



What happens when you put a group of CYC Educators together in a room?

CYC Educators Day 2016: Halifax Nova Scotia Canada

Heather Snell, Kelly Shaw and Wendy Weninger

For many years, Child and Youth Care (CYC) Educators have gathered on the day prior to the opening of the National CYC Conference to discuss the practice and challenge of CYC Education. The 2016 version of CYC Educators' Day was sponsored by the Child and Youth Care Education Accreditation Board (CYCEAB), with the expressed goals of identifying and exploring the issues and challenges shared by CYC Educators, and to consider ways to continue this dialogue and support the evolution of a CYC Educators' Community of Practice. To the CYC Educators organizing the day the concept of a Community of Practice seemed relevant as a framework for thinking about how practices in CYC Education connected Educators with each other – despite the fact that we all taught in different geographies, contexts and were situated within very different educational jurisdictions.

Our concept of a Community of Practice in CYC Education was framed not as a 'thing' – the goal of Educators' Day was not to create yet another organization – rather it was to identify more than just communalities, to do more than merely network. The intention was to begin to parse our identity as a shared domain of practice; to collect and consider evidence of our commitment to this domain and to gather evidence of the shared competence that distinguishes CYC Education. Considering CYC Education as a Community of Practice could not only support Educators to share information and experience, but might also support the creation of new relationships that would lead to the creation of new knowledge. Importantly in planning the 2016 CYC Educators' Day, the CYCEAB planning group began with the observation that the vast majority of CYC Educators were themselves rooted in CYC practice; we are a community of practitioners. This quality, this identity might be an important lens through which we can develop a

repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, and ways of 'doing' the work of educating and preparing students in CYC.

Applying the framework of a Community of Practice as a self-directed group of individuals, Facilitator, Andrew Middleton, engaged some 60 CYC Educators in an Open Technology style series of conversations. Educators considered three questions as they moved through the day:

1. What does a Community of Practice actually mean or look like? How does that compare to what we as CYC Educators have now?
2. How does / could the concept of practice identity impact our role as CYC Educators?
3. Within our practice infrastructure, what needs to be retooled or reinvented to build our Community of Practice as CYC Educators?

The vast majority of Educators in the space were absorbed with the discussions that rotated around the room. The discussion was rich, often passionate and filled with a uniquely CYC relational narrative. And the outcome? Well ...

Insights and questions were collected from all discussions. In a more traditional organizational structure, the planning committee, or institutional sponsor would remove the collected wisdom of the group and study it – owning it, using the information as a single source. Not so when the intentions of the conversations were to parse our identity as a domain and to collect evidence of commitment and the shared competencies that distinguish CYC Education. In keeping with the concept of CYC Education as a Community of Practice the input and ownership of the conversations from Educators' Day have not been relegated to a privileged few for action. Rather, these conversations are continuing; being shared as testimony to the emerging domain of CYC Education. What follows are the collected notes from Educators' Day 2016; a summary of the conversations gathered from CYC Educators across Canada. If you are connected to this community in any way, we invite you to read and consider. And we invite you to share, to keep the conversation animated and to reach out to other CYC Educators as practitioners within a shared domain. Not that CYC Educators are mono dimensional. Certainly if anything emerges from the lists that follow it is diversity. The themes that resonate for one will perhaps not even be noticed by another. This seems to be the nature of our emerging Community of

Practice; as CYC Educators entry points, sticking points and exit strategies are different for each.

Notes Contributed by Participants at CYC Educators' Day

Insights

- Ego
- Academic privilege at odds with nature of CYC practice
- Continual disruption – status quo is too safe
- Community of Practice = united in a shared passion
- Part-time faculty have minimal access to CYC news
- Safety net
- Gender gender gender
- We are not defined by a credential
- Hierarchy needs to end
- CYC Educator Community of Practice includes students
- Need to de-colonize CYC education
- Whose vision?
- Louder shared voice
- CYC advocacy
- Need a clear short blurb about who we are?
- CYC profession needs strong leadership and activism to clearly articulate and promote our vision, mission, scope of practice nationally, provincially, locally
- How to maintain the identity
- CYC – and hybridity and ambiguity and possibility and revolution
- I am so delighted to be in a program called CARE
- Communicate and demonstrate CYC scope of practice
- Have to work at not being independent players
- Passion and practice
- Imperatives and assumptions of the education institution won't allow practice methods and approach
- Sense of isolation
- I think with passion comes great learning and teaching opportunities

- Both agencies in the community and education = Community of Practice
- Change happens through relationship in the life space?
- Need recognition: legislation, accreditation, certification
- How to safeguard the profession
- CYC is still unknown
- Fighting to have our unique professional identity in university settings
- Accrediting body needs to clearly define instructor criteria
- CYC is who I am. Educate is what I do.
- Faculty need to commit to their community
- People vs roles
- We need to unify to support CYC practice through accreditation
- There are no divisions
- Identify impact on hiring policy
- Academia is the problem, not CYC identity
- Parallel complexity across practice environments.

Questions

- What do we love about CYC?
- How can we integrate and yet be unique?
- What is our concept of practice?
- Gender and childhood?
- Can we define something subjective?
- Do individual post-secondary institutions have a defined practice identity?
- Challenge the colonial academic status quo
- Is safety necessary in community?
- Does there have to be safety?
- Congruency within CYC?
- How to/why make something better that does not fit?
- Team?
- Why did we choose to teach?
- What is a CYC?
- Can we create a public service announcement as a national community that explains who CYCs are, why they are important and where you can find them?

- How do we become a more united profession?
- We have a responsibility as educators to work towards public and professional recognition of CYC work.
- How do we teach CARE and evaluate it?
- Who are the upcoming gurus? How can we mentor them?
- Even with more CYC BA programs, would many of our students choose to do BSWs anyway?
- How do we develop the relationships on every level institutionally?
- How do we support diverse CYCPs?
- How do we encourage the increase of/use of CYC literature?
- Are there salt-water frogs in Halifax? ... 'cause I'm ready to kiss one.
- How to maintain identity within academia?
- If we cannot articulate our practice identity in our own institutions, how can we nationally?
- We need to mentor CYC educators to undertake PhDs?
- How to shift from "old boys/old girls" network to community that welcomes and mentors?
- How can we erase judgement?
- Why are there only three men in this room?
- How can we create a shared identity of CYC?
- Do we need to agree on a common definition of practice? Community of passion versus of community practice.
- As part of the informal consent process, we should be self-identifying as CYC.
- Speech – what is our elevator speech? Some think we should have an elevator speech. But is the speech what we do / where we come from / or how we were educated?
- How do we advocate with a stronger voice (CYC)?
- Perhaps we are and should embrace CYC education as a feminist practice espousing feminist identity and ways of being in the world
- If you were hiring CYC faculty, what is important?
- How do we support diversity while also protecting the uniqueness of our profession
- Are we gatekeepers?
- CYC in the real world? Not theory but practice.

Interesting? Perhaps you have something to add, or to take away?
And so it begins ...

Heather Snell

is a faculty member in the Bachelor of Child and Youth Care program at Humber College, Toronto, Canada and is the Chair of the Research Committee on the Child and Youth Care Education Accreditation Board of Canada. Her eclectic background draws her to work in the 'in-betweens' - merging disciplines, supporting collaborations, learning and building capacity while seeking excellence in child and youth care education and practice.



Wendy Weninger

has been an instructor in the Child and Youth Care program at Lethbridge College for over 20 years, following years of experience in front line and supervisory practice in residential care, youth mentorship, and treatment foster care support. At present she is also the Chair of the School of Human Services at Lethbridge College, is the ACAT Articulation Chair for CYC, is a member of the CYCAA Certification Committee and a Board member for CYC Educational Accreditation Board of Canada.



Kelly Shaw

is currently core faculty at the Nova Scotia Community College in the Child and Youth Care Diploma Program. She has an MA in Child and Youth Study, holds Child and Youth Care certification from the CYC Certification Board and is completing a PhD in Educational Studies at Brock University. Prior to moving to pre-service CYC education she spent a number of years working in a group treatment program that focused on family support and intervention and believes that family is always present.



Sailing Through the Fog: Practicums in Canadian Child and Youth Education

Michael Keough

Keywords

practicum, fieldwork, education, curricula, Child and Youth Care

Abstract

Practicum courses are widely acknowledged as an extremely important aspect of Child and Youth Care (CYC) education in Canada, and as such, they are consistently embedded in CYC programs' curricula. Despite this perceived importance, there has been very little research that has documented what educational practices in CYC practicums are and if these practices are effective in training students. This article summarizes key findings from a 2-year study that involved 31 CYC programs. Through questionnaires, a web search, personal correspondences, data pertaining to four themes of practicum education (structure, requisites, supervision, and evaluation) was reported on. This article is an extension of the study's finding, with additional emphasis on recommendations for future research.

Introduction

For two years I worked with the research committee for the Child and Youth Care Educational Accreditation Board (CYCEAB), in Canada conducting a study on practicum education in Child and Youth Care (CYC). This study described eighteen variables within four major themes of practicum education (structure, requisites, supervision, and evaluation). A PDF of the study can be found at www.cycaccreditation.ca. This article highlights some of the findings from this study, as well as expands on some of the ambiguous areas of practicum education identified in the study, inclusive of its literature review. The article then provides recommendations for future research that will continue

to improve CYC education and further establish CYC as a field with evidence-informed educational practices.

Literature Review

Domestic and international researchers have reported that practicums have significant value in student education (Garthwait, 2005; Grady, 2011; Jarman-Rohde, McFall, Kolar, & Strom, 1997; Kadushin, 1991; Schultz, 2005; Shardlow, Scholar, Munro, & McLaughlin, 2012; Wayne, Bogo, & Raskin, 2006). Some researchers, however, challenge this widespread belief as being factual (Holden, Barker, Rosenberg, Kuppens, & Ferrell, 2010) and there have been many negative aspects of practicums reported by students, including financial strain, increased substance use, somatic symptoms of stress, anxiety, negative impacts on sleeping, eating, and concentrating, as well as coping with stress by self-harming (Brown & Bourne, 1996; Daye, 2012; Didham, Dromgole, Csiernik, Karley, & Hurley, 2011; Jacobs, 1991; Wayne, Bogo, & Raskin, 2006).

Researchers also reported many different perspectives on certain aspects of practicum, including student supervision (Arthur & Groerer, 2002; Forkan & McElwee, 2002; Phelan, n.d.; Trepal, Bailie, & Leeth, 2010; Ryan, Toohey, & Hughes, 1996), the supervisors' credentials (Peebles-Wilkins, 2003; Phelan, 2005), practicum assessments (Phelps & Swerdlik, 2011). As well as ethical concerns, such as supervisors' reluctance to fail students (Bogo, Regher, Power & Regher, 2007; Brear & Dorrian, 2010; Finch & Poletti, 2014; Finch & Taylor, 2013; Sowbel, 2012). There are also different perspectives on how and what should be assessed on (Blunden, 1996; Gambrill, 2010; Phelps & Swerdlik, 2011; Yorke, 2011) and evaluated (Holden, Barker, Rosenberg, & Onghena, 2007; Morrison, 1997; Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010; Schultz, 2005). With all of these different opinions on how to conduct practicum education it is no wonder that evaluating practica has been identified as being an essential factor in the progression of educational practice in allied fields (Barnett *et al.*, 1999; Ryan, Toohey, & Hughes, 1996).

Method

This article reports on a study of CYC practicum practices for the 2014-2015 academic year. Twenty CYCEAB members, representing 31 CYC programs participated in this study. CYCEAB members were sent a questionnaire by Heather Snell, on behalf of the CYCEAB research committee. In addition to a number of specific questions directly on the questionnaire itself, participants were also asked on the questionnaire to submit program documentation, such as practicum manuals for students, school supervisors, and agency

supervisors. Data from these questionnaires and the supporting documentation was transferred on to thematic tables that were developed based on several research questions. A web search of the participating CYCEAB member websites and correspondence with CYCEAB members were additional means of data collection. The project had several research questions that were converted into the themes of practicum structure, requisites, supervision, and evaluation. Within each theme were a number of variables. This article references information from the study's literature review as well as summarizes some of the study's key findings. The article then expands on the previous studies recommendations for future research.

Findings and Results

This study found there to be a significant diversity in CYC practicum practices happening among CYCEAB member programs. These differences occurred in all four of the themes analyzed in this study, as well as within and across all five of the credentials represented. While the vast majority of differences in these practices were mild/moderate, others were quite significant. This study referenced current research that pertains to practicum practices in CYC and allied fields to address some of the possible implications of the data reported in this study. The research cited mostly documents current practices in some allied fields, and the respective professional opinions of those practices. The study has identified the need to continue researching many different areas of CYC practicum education.

The Range in Practice

There was a considerable range in how CYC programs structured practicum education. Some of the most notable ranges include the number of practicums, in hours necessary to complete a practicum(s), the number of students, school staff and agency partners, the frequency of contact between students and agency/school supervisors, the number of assignments being evaluated during practicum, and so on.

The largest difference in the number of practicums was among diploma programs, where students could complete as little as one practicum (typically in the final semester), or as many as four practicums which were spread throughout the program. Having more practicums did not always translate into more time spent by students at practicum sites. Even though one of the CYC programs mentioned above has four practicums, students' completed nearly half of the practicum hours in that program compared to another diploma program that offered two practicums. This is not indicative of better or worse

practices, but it points out that students have vastly different experiences depending on which CYC program they were in.

Practicum hours were of considerable interest to the CYCEAB research committee, not only because of the vast range in hours, but also because the range in hours did not correspond to the credential in the way that some might assume it would. When comparing credentials by lowest to highest, one might assume that there would be a gradual increase in hours as credentials were higher; however, that assumption would be false. The MA program, which was the highest credential in this study, required 68% less hours than the average for diploma programs, which were the lowest credentials in this study. As unlikely as it is, it may be argued that as stand-alone programs, it is possible to complete an MA in less time than a diploma; thus practicum hours might better be compared with practicum length. That assumption would also be false. If the CYC program was longer it did not mean that more time would be spent in practicum education. To compare 4 year (bachelor programs) with 3 year (advanced diploma programs), not only was the opposite true, but it was true by a substantial margin. Bachelors programs averaged 718 hours, while advanced diploma programs averaged 1166 hours, making the shorter programs approximately 450 hours more on average than the longer programs.

The range in hours was also explored in connection to the region of the program institution. In some cases, regional differences were easily identifiable. Amongst the diploma credential, programs in Alberta averaged 780 hours, while in BC they averaged 300 hours, and in the Maritimes they averaged 486 hours. This was more difficult to compare in some of the other credentials, as all advanced diploma programs and accelerated advanced diploma programs are located in Ontario. If these programs have more hours, is it because of the region – that is due to Provincial Ministry of Education requirements, or could the uniqueness be attributed to the program or credential? The one CYC baccalaureate in Ontario that participated in this study does have more hours on average than the baccalaureate programs from Western Canada, but it is by a smaller margin (approximately 10%).

Thus far practicum range has largely been discussed across the different CYC credentials, but it is important to note that there is a significant range in hours within each credential as well. The range in hours for diploma programs is 300-820 hours; in advanced diploma programs it is 840-1440 hours; the largest difference is in the accelerated advanced diploma programs at 480-1200 hours, and the smallest difference is in bachelors programs at 600-980 hours. The only thing consistent about practicum

hours is their inconsistency. This is not surprising, as there is no research that conclusively defines how many hours it takes for students to get optimal practicum experiences.

The majority of CYC programs are fairly consistent with when they schedule their initial practicum placement (typically in semester 2 or 3). This is true across the different credentials. There are of course exceptions to this practice, which create a considerable range in when programs may begin practicums, outside or the norm. It is noted that one of the baccalaureate programs in Western Canada, which also offers a diploma level program, is on one side of this range, allowing for students to begin practicum as early as semester 1, while other programs are on the other side of the continuum, not permitting students to begin initial practicums until as late as semester 5 or 6. This range is arguably as significant, or more so, than the range in practicum hours, as many authors' have discussed the role that practicums have in knowledge integration.

In addition to the ranges in the area of practicum structure, there are also significant ranges in program sizes and supervision practices. These ranges seem to be most substantial as they occur within each of the individual credentials. Some examples of these are in the accelerated advanced diploma programs, where enrolment varies between 5-240 students, or in the diploma programs where there is 28-200+ agency partners, or in the bachelors programs where the number of school staff supervising practicums ranges from faculty instructors to one part-time coordinator and up to twenty four supervisors.

There were two more notable ranges in regards to supervision practices. First is the range in the qualifications of school supervisors. While there most commonly seems to be a standard of supervisors having one degree higher than the program that the students are in, there are some exceptions to this. In the diploma programs for example, school supervisor credentials can vary from having a CYC/CYW diploma to having a master's degree. The second notable range is the frequency of supervision between school supervisors and students. Across the different credentials, diploma programs have the highest-rate of weekly supervision at 71%. Accelerated advanced diploma programs and bachelors programs have less weekly supervision and more "regular" supervision than diploma programs. Supposing that "regular" supervision is less frequent than weekly supervision, which I predict it is, students would then be generally getting less frequent supervision as they continue on in their education to higher credentials. This continues to be true in CYC graduate education as students then only receive supervision "at various points".

Differences in Type

The previous section discussed differences in ranges (within the same variables). Practicum types compare different variables altogether. One of the primary practicum types that were explored was whether or not practicums were completed as block placements, concurrent with other academic courses, or students were given a choice between the two. At one point or another all credentials utilized both block and concurrent practicums. The study found that the earlier practicums are sequenced in curricula, the more likely they are to be concurrent, and the opposite is true for block placements. When initial practicums begin in semester 2 of CYC programs they are 17% block placements; that number of block placements jumps to 50% when initial practicums begin in semester 3. There were notable differences across the different credentials as well. Diploma programs utilized block placements from 27-52% more than other credentials. Advanced and Accelerated Advanced Diploma programs had a fairly even split of block and concurrent practicums, and bachelors programs allowed for 33% of practicums to be either/both block and/or concurrent (almost double the next highest credential). Heather Snell – as chair of the CYCEAB Research Committee suggested that bachelor students may be viewed more as working professionals, which is why they are given the option of completing practicum in either block or current placements (personal communication, 2015).

The final “type” of practicum that was explored in this study was specialized practicums. Specialized practicums occur in specialized CYC programs that also involve students taking a number of academic courses outside of standard program curricula. One hundred percent of specializations in CYC programs are from British Columbia. Specializations include the Aboriginal Stream/Indigenous Specialization, Child Protection, Child Life, and Early Childhood. Specializations are often preferred or required for certain occupations, such as social work, post-graduation.

Evaluation

There are many common forms of evaluation, such as evaluation forms, learning plans/outcomes, written assignments, attendance and participation, and journals; however, there are also a number of more unique practices as well. There was additional evidence that CYC fieldwork evaluation practices included innovative approaches that include student portfolio presentations, learning-experience assignments, triad interviews, videotaping, case reports, blogging, group projects, and weekly activities based on the seven domains of practice. There is a vast difference in CYC practicum

evaluation practice – without clear evidence of how these practices may relate to practicum structure or method of supervision. For example, one program requires students to complete 2 evaluations, while another requires students to complete 25 observations, 9 activities, a task checklist, and 2 evaluations. Within each of the above approaches to evaluation, there are considerable differences as well. Some programs grade evaluation forms directly while others use it to inform school supervisors in deciding on a grade.

Learning Outcomes

Due to the size of this project, this study simply identified whether or not programs had explicitly documented student learning outcomes. In some cases, there were program-wide learning outcomes, in others learning outcomes are specific to course(s) within a program. Learning outcomes were not always clearly identified. For instance, one graduate CYC program included in the study does not specifically document learning outcomes. However, they have explicitly stated course objectives and evaluation criteria, as well as the requirement that students complete personal learning goals.

Pre-requisites

There were several pre-requisites explored in this project. Pre-requisites were defined as either courses or experiences required by the student prior to beginning their first practicum, or as required before continuing with more advanced practicum registration. First was the exploration of academic pre-requisites prior to enrolment in the initial practicum. Only one credential (accelerated advanced diploma) explicitly stated having a pre-requisite(s) 100% of the time. Only one program allows for students to complete a first semester practicum (besides group practicums), which leads me to believe that there is a common practice of not explicitly stating academic pre-requisites. After all, why would CYC programs exclusively schedule academic courses for typically 1-2 semesters prior to their initial practicum, and then not require students to complete those courses prior to beginning practicum? It is more likely that programs are sequencing courses (academic and practicum) based on their logic and rationale. In this case programs seem to have determined that students should complete academic courses prior to beginning practicum (frontloading academics).

To varying extents CYC programs almost exclusively frontload academics. At the extreme, some programs do not schedule initial practicums until the fourth or fifth semester of their respective CYC program. This is consistent with the perspective that it is

better to prepare students for practicums with coursework (Oglesby, et al., 2013); however, this is a debatable issue. Other professionals would argue that frontloading academics may hinder student learning, as early practicums give students a deeper/more established context for learning in the classroom (M. Wilenski, personal correspondence, February 20th, 2015). Further to this point, research has shown that student self-efficacy increases with early practicums (Steele & Rawls, 2015), and that early practicums are deemed preferential by some (Fewster, 1990a).

The other area of pre-requisites explored in this study are non-academic pre-requisites, including first aid training, criminal record checks (CRC), suicide intervention training, volunteer experience, and student-health variables. The decision for requiring some of these pre-requisites was often different from the school and the agency partner. An example of this is in regards to student-health variables, where the agency can request that the student have a physical health exam. In some instances, pre-requisites were required for initial practicums, but not subsequent ones. This may put clients at a risk of harm, as students' may not have had a criminal record check for 2-3 years prior to their final practicum, where they are being placed in positions of trust with vulnerable populations. This study also showed that students would typically be getting less supervision during latter practicums as well.

Practicum Readiness

Among CYCEAB programs, there was no formal practicum readiness assessment discovered, leaving me to believe that programs are assessing practicum readiness based on student performance in classroom bound courses and/or practicum interviews, or that students are simply not being assessed for practicum readiness. The possibility that students not being assessed by any CYC program prior to practicums was especially striking after I found research reporting that the majority of psychology programs are conducting student readiness evaluations (Hatcher, Wise, & Grus, 2015).

Gatekeeping

Further to the discussion on requisites and practicum readiness is the practice of gatekeeping, which seems to be another largely implicit practice. Gatekeeping is the somewhat taboo processing of failing or postponing to promote students for a number of reasons (lack of skill, concerning behaviour(s), practice/ethical incompetence). I found gatekeeping to be the most crucial factor identified in this study as the literature review revealed that students are frequently promoted through field work despite their direct

supervisor feeling that they should not. Fortunately, there are some examples of gatekeeping practices across CYCEAB member programs, including specific colleges that allow for only two fieldwork interviews, colleges with expressed practices that delay practicum placements based on inappropriate classroom behaviour, and other practices that require students to receive 80% on their performance evaluation to pass practicum. However, there was not evidence that programs participating in this study included these or similar gatekeeping policies. It is deeply concerning that students may then graduate despite a practicum evaluation that suggests they may not be ready. Unfortunately, there was evidence suggesting that in some programs supervisors concerns may not be addressed and the student may move on to work with vulnerable populations after completing school, in a work environment with little direct supervision. This could put both the student and service users at risk.

Recommendations for Future Research

The range in practicum hours both within and across the different credentials was of particular interest to the CYCEAB research committee. Largely because in many cases shorter programs were reporting more hours than longer programs and higher credentials often had fewer hours than lower credentials. Even programs within some credentials had more than double the amount of hours as each other in some cases. I was unable to find any research that recommended a standard number of hours based on evidence of learning efficiency. What was identified was that internationally social work programs reported a much greater range in hours than this study, with practicums in the United States being 57 days and programs in the United Kingdom and Nordic countries bring a minimum of 200 days (Shardlow *et al.*, 2012). Having a range of practice is inevitable, but programs could possibly benefit from having the guidance of a standard of practice (Yorke, 2011).

In the evaluation theme whether programs were pass/fail or graded was reported. Bachelor programs also had the highest percentage of graded practicums by far. It is unclear why bachelor's students are being graded at much higher rates than the other credentials in this study. It is also unclear how academic credit is given. This becomes particularly confusing in regard to courses being pass/fail or graded, as academic credit given to practicum courses had a range of approximately 1.5 - 9 credits for a single practicum.

Learning outcomes were often labelled differently across CYCEAB programs. Sometimes learning outcomes were clearly documented, other times programs

documented their philosophies and clearly structured course assignments and evaluation forms to assess students in particular areas, indicative of learning areas prioritized by programs. Although these processes have similarities, learning outcomes seem preferable. For the student, learning outcomes are beneficial as they provide the student with direction from the beginning of practicums. This may assist students by giving them context and transparency regarding practicum goals prior to learning/reflective exercises, which may be completed at various times in practicum including the mid-point and toward the end. Learning outcomes have also been reported to promote skill acquisition and competency (Morrison, 1997; Petracchi & Zastrow, 2010). For educators, it's important to know what it is that is being taught and why, before figuring out how to teach it. Learning outcomes could help to make this process clear and intentional. Future research should comprehensively look at learning outcomes. What are they? Why are they prioritized over others? How are CYC program and course curricula converting learning outcomes into student competence, based on course content, course, sequences, assignments, and so on?

It was clear in the study's literature review that there are many different approaches to supervision and that research has also given direction for what qualities make supervisors more effective at training students. But beyond whether or not supervisors are utilizing these qualities, what else happens in student supervision? Intuitively I suspect that supervisors are conducting supervision differently and that these differences could affect student learning. Do supervisors have a "go with the flow" approach, or do they follow certain criteria? The literature review also indicated that students are developing significant mental health challenges during practicums in allied fields. This often happens in child protection, which is an optional practicum site for many CYC students. This is clearly a substantial problem that directly affects students, so what is being done in supervision or other components of practicum to prevent this from happening?

This project showed a considerable difference in frontline school supervision staff across programs, from one faculty to up to 24 supervisors. Faculty that have taught students would likely have a better relationship with students than contracted practicum supervisors. If we as a field know the importance of relationship (Bellefeuille & Ricks, 2010; Fewster, 1990b; Phelan, 2005), then why are programs choosing to hire staff unfamiliar to students, instead of staff that students have a relationship with? It seems likely that funding issues may be influencing educational practice in a negative way.

Future research should explore the impact that funding limitations are having on practicum education.

Another area to explore is gatekeeping practices. This project identified an absence of explicit gatekeeping practices for the vast majority of CYC programs. Why is this happening when graduates are often trusted to work with vulnerable populations and incompetence masked by a credential may put the student and service users at risk? Schools need to address competency issues and they need to make sure that the public is protected (Johnson, *et al.*, 2008). Future research should propose a solution(s) to this problem, so that CYC programs can implement not only ethical gatekeeping practices, but also ensure adequate support for student learning immediately.

Conclusion

Knowingly, this article focused on the differences in practicum education across CYC programs much more than the similarities. It must be observed that despite the focus for this article, there were indeed similarities in Canadian practices in CYC field work. For example, all CYC programs in the study utilized some type of evaluation form and all programs required some form of personal contact or onsite visits. There were also many more instances where the vast majority of programs exhibited similar practices, such as a minimum of regular supervision, learning outcomes, written assignments, agency involvement, timing of practicums, and so on. It is important to clarify that similarities are not necessarily strengths, as differences are not necessarily weaknesses. There is very little empirical evidence available to distinguish what “best” practice is, making this article, and the study that it reports on, a snapshot of what practice is and not what it should be.

Although this article predominantly embodies a neutral stance on educational practices, there are some exceptions, where the findings from research in other fields logically prompt CYC to question some of its current practices. Areas of practice, such as student supervision and learning outcomes have been deemed important in other fields and they are largely ambiguous in CYC, at least in operationalization; thus they not only merit future research, but it is imperative that research explores these areas. Practices pertaining to student mental health and gatekeeping are a matter of safety, which trumps learning, making these necessary research endeavours as well. Perhaps by CYC doing what it does best, being curious and focusing action on relationships and context, all of these matters will be appropriately addressed. Then perhaps other allied fields will begin

to look to CYC education as an innovator in evidence-based practices that support and prepare students for the demands of professional practice.

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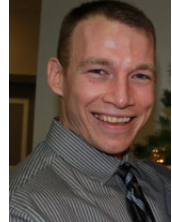
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Michael Keough, YJWD, MA (CYC)

began working with children as a volunteer gymnastics instructor 16 years ago. Since then he has worked with youth in school-based, youth justice, addictions, residential, and recreational settings. For the past several years he has been a Child and Youth Mental Health Clinician for the Ministry of Children and Family Development in British Columbia. He lives in Chilliwack, BC, with his amazing wife Farrah and their beautiful son Harrison.



Reading Child and Youth Care

Wolfgang Vachon

Reading Child and Youth Care

is a column about resources that may be of use to Child and Youth Care Workers, and allied professions. While books will remain a focus for reviews, it will not be the exclusive focus. Websites, comics, twitter accounts, videos, and any other relevant resource may be reviewed. If you have a resource that might apply, please email

wolfgang.vachon@humber.ca

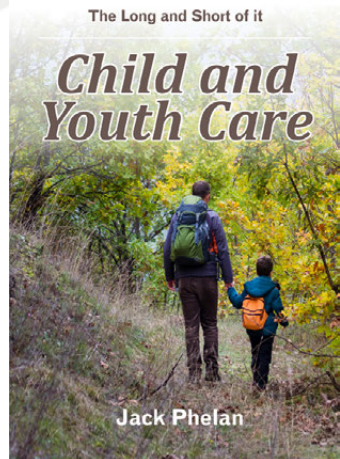
Review

Child and Youth Care – The Long and Short of it

Available [here](#) from The CYC-Net Press

Jack Phelan has been practicing, teaching and/or writing about Child and Youth Care (CYC) practice for going on five decades. In that time, he has accumulated a vast wealth of knowledge, skill, and wisdom. In *The Long and Short of It: Child and Youth Care* he shares some of this with us. Breaking the book down into five sections he provides an experience filled text ideally suited to students, novice practitioners and CYC supervisors.

Section one is called "experience arranger", in these 16 short chapters, Phelan translates his deep understanding of CYC into practical and accessible concepts. He posits that the role of the CYC practitioner (CYCP) is to be an experience arranger, by which he means "someone who creates opportunities in the real world for people to experience themselves as competent and successful" (p. 22). This is a lovely description of CYC practice, removing any sort of pathologizing language or the implication that we are in people's lives to fix, help, train, punish, or otherwise impose upon them. While all of these actions may at times happen (often inappropriately so, according to Phelan) by not seeing this as our purpose we can meet the young people



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and their families “where they are at” in their own life space. Phelan returns to themes he’s been writing about for many years: the stages of the practitioner, being responsive to the young person, using oneself in the work, power, language, and other ideas. Those who regularly read *CYC-Online* will recognize some of these pieces, although I suspect even the most committed reader will find several they missed along the way (Phelan has been writing for a while).

When I wrote my first series of articles for *CYC-Online*, Phelan (ever the teacher) shared with me his approach to writing for the publication: write nothing longer than can be read while sitting on the toilet. In *The Long and Short of It* he (mostly) stays true to this credo. It makes for quick and enjoyable reading. I found myself thinking “one more”, then “okay, really this is the last one”. For those who don’t binge-read, it may be a book to savour and reflect upon, perhaps using it like a daily meditation on CYC practice. Although, with 67 chapters, weekly meditation would be a better rhythm and I could imagine reading a chapter and then using that theme to become my focus as a practitioner: “This week my goal is to show humility”, “this week appreciate absurdity”, “be more mindful of my language”, “let go of the notion of consistency”, “this week I won’t use rewards or punishments.”

CYC-Online is not a peer reviewed journal. While it does have longer pieces in each issue, the format and purpose is different from indexed journals. I find it a wonderful resource which I read monthly. I value that it is free, accessible, long lasting and that columnists can write about pretty much whatever they want. It is not uncommon for ideas expressed in the journal to lead to discussions on the CYC-Net discussion group (and vice-versa). With that said, at times it can be frustrating to read unsupported claims in columns and articles on *CYC-Online*. Phelan does this many times in *The Long and Short of It*. There is much that I agree with in Phelan’s writing, but not everyone will. He raises provocative ideas; he challenges, pushes, and demands. And he frequently does not support his ideas beyond an anecdote. This is unfortunate and detracts from the collection. For many years, and by many people, CYC has been accused of being wishy-washy and not a real profession or discipline (see, how annoying it is when claims are made without support). While I don’t propose that we dismiss practice-based wisdom, case studies, anecdotes, or opinion pieces, making unsubstantiated declarations risks confirming arguments that CYC lacks sufficient rigour. It’s too easy to dismiss the wisdom that Phelan brings when he omits evidence to support his positions. I adore the idea of responding to aggression in a way that shows care, thereby creating “cognitive confusion” in the young person and sending the message that “I will be here with you, regardless of

your behaviours”. However, without substantiation it is hard to convince people to use this approach. As Phelan writes, people use behaviourist approaches because they show rapid results (and there is a significant body of studies to draw upon), if CYC wants to move people away from this practice let’s provide data or references showing why it is not an efficacious CYC approach (see for example Karen VanderVen’s work). Phelan does do this at times, for example when it comes to counselling (see p. 52), and more of this would enhance the book. With that said, I could imagine giving various chapters to groups of students, or as a CYC supervisor to a practitioner, and asking them to go find evidence to support or refute the arguments Phelan makes.

As I was reading I started to compile a list of ideas that resonated with me, ideas that seemed to capture essential elements of what we do and that I was interested in exploring further with students and other practitioners. As I started to make the list, it became quite long. Here are several of the many:

- CYC is a three step process:
 1. Create a safe relationship; 2. Do the change work; 3. Separate and close.
- Safety does not create change, it only creates safety.
- CYC staff can picture themselves as being the lifeguard at a pool, sitting on a high seat and blowing a whistle when they observe inappropriate or unsafe behavior, or they can picture themselves in the pool with the youth, creating safety and useful behaviors by being with the youth.
- One definition of a competent CYCP is that he/she will not give a person enough rope to hang himself when he/she is sure that he will hang himself.
- Skilled CYCPs know that there is no opportunity for change and growth without building a safe relationship first.
- Intruding into peoples’ lives is a messy business, especially when you are not particularly invited.
- Curiosity and ability to ask questions are essential CYC skills.
- Relational work is not just a job requirement, but a personal challenge.
- Effective CYC practice develops over time. The longer we work, the more we grow and the more effective we (can) become. As confidence and competence develops the CYC shifts from a me focus to a child/youth/family focus
- CYCs must be aware of their power, and the fear that power can cause.
- “Common sense” is not sound CYC theory.

- Rather than trying to get the youth to be more logical, I started to realize that they were very logical already, and that I needed to create bridges between our differing logic about how the world works.
- Show you care by going beyond what is expected – and don't look for or expect a thank you.
- Failure to negotiate a healthy end to any relationship will endanger the success of our present, but also our future efforts. Youths who have finally allowed themselves to be open and available to you will be easily bruised by poorly managed good-byes.
- Talking is highly overrated.

The Long and Short of It is a motivating call to action with demands that we change the way some of us work, and validates the ways others of us do. The collection is thoroughly grounded in a relational CYC approach in its many strengths and weaknesses. Using a combination of theory and stories Jack Phelan introduces us to ideas, situations, and people – all of which we learn from. This book is a valuable contribution to all CYC libraries.

Review

Confessions of a Teenage Transexual Whore

Understanding how to work with, and within, cultures different from one's own requires taking time to learn. For Child and Youth Care practitioners (CYCPs) who have limited or no experience of sex work, transitioning genders, or being "queer", *Confessions of a Teenage Transexual Whore* is an educational read. Called a virgin lesbian at 18, although they had had three different partners and did not identify as a lesbian, by the age of 19 Star was identifying as a gay man and calling himself a whore. As they put it, "I had gone from being a rich cis girl to being a poor trans kid" (Zine #2, p. 28). In some ways it is a dramatic transformation, yet it is all too common. The situation of transphobia and cisnormativity prevent many people who do not clearly fit into well-defined body norms from finding "legitimate" work. This is only one of the many reasons that some trans people resort to doing sex work as a way to survive. Paradoxically, it is also the reason many can make money doing such work.

Confessions is a ten "zine" series covering a two-year period of their life. During this time Star was transitioning from their gender assigned at birth to one they aligned with (Star now uses both "they" and "he" as pronouns), trying to make it in "The Big City", having relationships, going out, making art, and having sex for money. The zines are graphic in their writing and Star is explicit in his descriptions. It never feels any more gratuitous than the actions they describe. Some may say having sex in a park with people met online is lacking good reason; if you think so then you may find the graphic writing equally gratuitous. *Confessions* is not always enjoyable to read but it is endlessly insightful, and worth the time for everyone who works with youth.

Zine one, starts with why they chose to do sex work, the first advertisement to solicit clients, the first responses, the first blow job, and the first time they are paid to have intercourse. Zine two gives their biography of growing up in a small town and the decision to move away. Zine three covers Star's voyages into gay culture in The Big City (as they refer to it throughout the series), including hook-ups, friendships, and dating. The last story is of his first time doing anal sex, ending with the client paying about half of what they promised. I felt my anger well up as I read this story and wanted Star to go back to claim his money. This was a good reminder for me about my "needs" as a CYCP and the needs of those I work with. It was one of many self-reflection opportunities the stories provided.

The zines are composed of short vignettes – moments in Star's life, because of course, doing sex work is only a sliver of who they are. One that frequently defines people more than they may want. Just as many are labeled by the medical, judicial, or social service system, people who do sex work may be reduced to that aspect of themselves alone.

One of the many moments that provides valuable insight about relational practice starts with a visit to the hospital for a persistent and debilitating cough. Reminding me of *The Spirit Catches You and Fall Down*, Star tries to navigate cultural norms, and server-provider biases. Visiting a hospital is a fraught experience. "I am a feminine, queer, trans, guy, so I am not like other boys, and yet I am. My gender is complicated and comes in layers that I am apprehensive to unfold." In this story, Star raises many questions about maleness and trans identity in North America. Does he "pass", how does he explain the scars from top-surgery, will he disclose he is trans, how will he explain to the doctor that he takes testosterone, ("I have a ... testosterone deficiency. I take it as part of... hormone replacement therapy" is his reply, when asked)? The feelings and questions are refracted when Star writes about a first date. Instead of apprehension there is excitement,

anticipation, and sexiness. Very different feelings from visiting a hospital, yet... yet, once again he must decide how much to disclose and when – before kissing, after kissing, before his date slides their hand up Star’s thighs, before Star takes him into his mouth, before taking off his shirt (exposing his top surgery scars), his pants, his underwear? When?

Switching between stories of their sex work sessions and living life, *Confessions* is much like being a fly on the wall. Generally, I am not a fan of memoirs and biographies; however, *Confessions* feels less like reading about some famous (or infamous) person I’ll never meet, and more like going into the closely guarded worlds of many young people I have met. Star started to write these stories on an anonymous blog as a way to process and find community when they had no one else to speak with. Journaling in the digital age. I could see the zines being a model for other young people are interested in writing books about their own lives and experiences in the system.

Zines, back when they were collaged, photocopied, and written by hand or typewriter, were full of typos and errors that made them all the more “real”. No editors. No overseeing bodies. Just straight from mind, to paper, to me. Star, seems to also appreciate this bygone epoch. For while you can buy their zine in PDF version on the internet (starkisscreations.com), it still comes with typos, awkward phrasing, and hand drawn pictures. For me, who grew up in the age of pre-computer zines, this is endearing, and each typo brings both a smile and a truth. Others may find it something to endure rather than endear. For such people Star has told me they are working on a newly edited version.

In zine # 9 there is a lovely, and simultaneously sad sequence, where Star makes some profound changes. They realize he can live without doing sex work and that realization opens up hope within him. He understands he doesn’t need his boyfriend (whom he calls Bottom Boy) to feel whole or validated, he reconnects with his mother and accepts that she is “not my mother anymore”, it ends with a story of him finding a pre-transition picture of himself. Star writes to, and about, that young boy, struggling within a biologically incorrect body. As Star writes to this young self he claims it has not gotten better, it’s just stopped getting worse. Yet to this reader, there is a peace, a joy, an acceptance, and hope as this zine ends. Perhaps it is because I have met Star and know where they are now, but to me, it seems this sequence is a transformation into acceptance

Issue 10 is about endings. The last John, who happened to also be the first one. The last date with Bottom Boy, and the last entry of the zine. For those who find the ending

sad, Star is writing a new book, is busy making art (also at starkisscreations.com), in school, and working to make the world a better place for all people. For the CYCP who is interested in thinking through some of the difficult questions regarding supporting young people doing sex work, you can listen to an interview with Star on the May 25th episode of CYC Podcast at www.cycpodcast.org

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Wolfgang Vachon

entered child and youth care through theatre. He has been working with children and youth as an educator, artist, and advocate for over two decades. During the late 1980s he began employing interactive theatre processes to explore health choices with marginalized and street-identified youth. Community arts practice has informed his work with diverse young people including those in detention, state care, street involved and homeless, LGBTQ, and survivors of trauma. Wolfgang is a full-time faculty member in the Child and Youth Care programs at Humber College, and is the host of CYC Podcast: Discussions on Child and Youth Care (www.cycpodcast.org)



Vintage Baby Boomer

Firestorm

Donna Jamieson

By the time that you read this piece, it will be autumn but as I write it is still spring—the season of bright green leaves, budding flowers, returning birds and *conferences*. There are so many conferences and there is so much training at this time of year, that it is difficult to prioritize one's learning. After much deliberation, I registered for the 19th National Child and Youth Conference in Halifax. The conference is just over, and it was great to visit with, and learn from, both familiar colleagues and newcomers to the field. I have to admit the nearly five-hour flight (plus down time in the airport) is definitely not my favourite part of the experience. In fact, at one point, I said that this would likely be my last out of province Child and Youth Care Conference—and then the announcement was made that the next National Conference would be in British Columbia—hmm—one and half hours of flying — maybe ...

Ironically, it was about nine degrees and windy in beautiful Halifax, while back home in Alberta it was 30+. Sadly, raging fires and the evacuation of Fort McMurray were making headlines the whole time we were away. All we could do was watch the news helplessly as long convoys of evacuees slowly snaked their way through the walls of fire, many of them heading for Edmonton, my home town. Back home, I was amazed by the outpouring of support for the evacuees. Our campus residence, along with every other available shelter in the city was filled to capacity with suddenly displaced families. Recreational facilities for children and youth expanded their services to meet the needs of young people suddenly away from everything familiar to them. Our students volunteered time at recreational settings and in temporary housing accommodation in order to provide therapeutic activities for children, youth and families. Animal shelters and doggie daycares opened their doors to the many retrieved pets that had to be left behind in the exodus—their focus was on re-uniting these pets with their families.

While watching the news during the crisis, I was especially touched by Rex Murphy's commentary. He spoke about how Fort McMurray had always opened its heart to

everyone—accepting hundreds and even thousands down on their luck from every Canadian province and even from outside of the country. He stressed the unconditional support that Fort McMurray had provided to others for many years and underlined that it was now time to give back to them. This is not a usual presentation of Fort Mac—a city that is often vilified for its "dirty" oil. I have only been to this city once, many years ago, but even then I was struck by the diversity of the community and the acceptance of all newcomers—in many ways this seemed to be a community of pioneers—hardy folk ready to make the best of their circumstances. I suspect that there will be a few who will not return to rebuild, but most of those interviewed during the disaster expressed determination to go home.

Loss and separation was my conference topic and a number of other workshops considered trauma and trauma-informed care. In my mind, trauma and loss are inseparable topics — every significant loss involves trauma, and every trauma involves significant losses — some tangible and some intangible. Sadly, these topics seemed particularly fitting as we watched nearly 90 thousand people flee from everything they owned. Many had no time to return home or to collect anything, leaving with just the clothing they were wearing, often uncertain as to the whereabouts of family and friends. The miracle is that as I write this there have been no reports of human death as a direct result of the fire although sadly two young women did perish in an automobile accident as they fled. The enormity of the loss has not even begun to sink in — vehicles, homes, businesses, missing family pets. Beautiful natural habitats and wildlife of every type wiped out in the inferno. However, as the refugees stated over and over, all that really mattered to them was to know that family and friends were safe.

As I write this column adrenaline is high and most of the evacuees are still in shock — just surviving from one day to the next, thankful to be alive. They have not yet begun to deal with the reality of the experience that they have had. One young mother being interviewed said that she thought her children were unaffected by their experience, but then her son started waking up with nightmares, reliving the fires that they had driven through. On television I noticed another young girl, about nine years old standing quietly sucking her thumb in a relocation center, no doubt regressing to earlier forms of self-soothing to cope with her experience. It is impossible to predict the final outcome for the community and for the individuals affected. Even those of us not directly impacted are still reeling — a number of us at the conference were in tears as we sat watching the event on television. We can be sure that some of these survivors will experience the symptoms of post-traumatic stress syndrome.

There is something about a crisis that often brings out the very best in people. Researchers have referred to this as our “tribal” instinct. When we are threatened by mass disaster, differences are put aside and everyone pitches in. We all pull together to make a difference. This is as it should be. However, I do find myself wishing that our responses to less visible smaller or individual crises were similar. Too often we turn away from those who need our help—the homeless, the hurt and lost — perhaps thinking that someone else will reach out, or maybe somehow holding them responsible for their own woes. Or maybe just so preoccupied with our own “stuff” that others are invisible to us, or maybe the survival of the species does not seem to be at imminent risk so we don’t need to go “tribal”.

I think about the children, youth and families with whom we are involved and the unimaginable losses and traumas that many of them have survived—their own personal wildfires. They, like the Fort McMurray residents need, first and foremost, to be safe. They need predictability and structure. Their basic needs must be addressed before anything else can be considered. Relational safety is especially crucial for these individuals. Listening to displaced residents talking about the anguish of not knowing where their family, friends and pets were really brought this home to me. Safe and caring relationships are needed to begin to heal and move forward. It seems like the whole world is offering this kind of assistance to Fort McMurray and that is great. They will need this care for the months and years ahead. When something of this magnitude occurs here is really no quick or easy fix.

However, we need to recall that there are others whose lives and whole history have been a state of continuous trauma and loss. When the trauma is not a twenty-foot-high wall of fire it sometimes becomes more difficult to be patient and not to blame the victims, thinking that they should “just get over it.” The 2015 final report of the *Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) Commission* painfully reminds us of the long lasting effects of loss and trauma across generations, communities and cultures. When family, friends and community are prevented from providing, or not able to provide, the unconditional caring that is needed it falls on others to fill the void. Too many times this ball has been dropped. The *Call to Action* by the TRC commission challenges all of us to step up and do our part to right not only the long-standing injustice done to indigenous peoples, but, to remember everyone who has suffered trauma across generations, or in their own immediate lives. While writing this article, two of our program’s graduates dropped in for a visit. Both of them have now been working in the Children’s Services system for about six years. They both love their work and feel like they are making a difference. However,

they talked about the children and youth, both indigenous and non-indigenous, that continue to be further damaged on a daily basis by being moved unnecessarily, by being denied access to family and community and at times by being further abused or by having their need to belong ignored. We have come a long way, but as my mother (and Robert Frost) used to say, “We have miles to go before we sleep.”

So many of the things that are second nature to us as child and youth care workers remain breaking news to others working in the field. Recently, in Alberta, it was announced that all agencies providing care to young people away from home must show that they have considered: trauma-informed care, separation and loss, and developmental approaches in their program contract proposals. These areas have been part of the focus of child and youth care education and treatment for many years. For us, strength-based relational practice that includes the three variables listed above, and that most often occurs within the life space of children, youth and families, has always been seen as critical in helping people heal, change and move forward. It is nice to be in style finally!

I feel like I have been meandering all over the map as I write this column (likely because I have). However, my message really is simple, “Let’s do the best we can to support and help each other with the skills, knowledge and positive intentions we have.” When trauma and loss strike at any level, let’s step forward and stay in place for as long as needed. It has been said that things like family violence and violent crime decreased significantly in New York after 9/11. People were focused on working together to insure their survival. Imagine what the world could be like if this mentality could be tapped globally on an on-going basis. What if we became so invested in surviving and thriving as a species that we set aside differences of culture, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, religious and political beliefs, and just focused on helping each other and on creating a better world?

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Donna Jamieson

is the chair of the Bachelor of Child and Youth Care Program at MacEwan University, where she has taught since 1996. For over twenty years prior to this, she was the program supervisor for a CYC program that provided consultation, assessment and intervention for complex “high risk” families referred by provincial caseworkers. Donna became a registered psychologist and a certified Child and Youth Care Counsellor in the early 1980s. She has since moved to a retired psychologist status, but maintains active certification status and is very involved with the Child and Youth Care Association of Alberta (CYCAA).



around and about

Shifting Considerations

Garth Goodwin

This last May, there was an incident in Manitoba which shook those who work on the front lines of child and youth care practice so deeply it compelled child and youth care association leaders to speak out, first among them fellow association member and President of the Child and Youth Care Workers Association of Manitoba, Jessica Hadley, who in a letter to CBC News stated:

*"Unfortunately, the reality is that this high-risk work environment is one that hundreds of child and youth care practitioners experience every day in this province. What happened on Sunday has happened to other people in this field where assaults and verbal abuse are a daily occurrence."*²

For this writer, the shock was immediate and regrettable as well. It is only natural to want to believe that things can and do change, that progress is indeed made in this world, that things do get better, and yet here was a train wreck of a shift that which for a number of factors suggests those who work in the child and youth care field at all levels do not want to get it, do not want to operate on a truly professional basis, prefer the absence of operating standards and just going about their business. This would be fine if child and youth care was just a job but it is not; it is rocket science, it does require oversight, standards and living vigilance in order to function. This column is this writer's forensic take on this incident.

A first year college student is on the last day of her practicum placement. She is working with a support worker who is also female. They have two clients in the addictions facility which is to close and cease operations in a few weeks' time. One of the clients asks for and is given a baseball bat from the office. He begins to pound a couch with it. The worker asks for it back successfully. The student takes one of the two upstairs to his bedroom on the residential third floor. Alexandra Paul wrote in *The Winnipeg Free Press* victim Jackie Healey's interview with her:

² <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/youth-care-assaults-manitoba-1.3612697>

"She recalled both boys showing up on the third floor with the baseball bat. "I took three steps and I don't remember anything after that," Healey said. Contrary to media reports, she now knows she was attacked on the third floor. "I thought I was attacked on the main floor but they said the office on the third floor was covered in blood, everywhere. Some of the staff couldn't go in there. I don't remember."

She has "little clips of memories" after that, like the sound of her brother's truck being gunned hard and looking up and seeing it shoot down the driveway. Like reaching the main floor, pulling the fire alarm. Like barricading herself in the main office and dialing 911. And her own home." ³

Her coworker that night was overwhelmed by the boys who took back the bat and beat her. She played dead and they went upstairs and attacked Healey taking her truck to flee the scene.

This writer views child and youth care practice as rocket science for the complexity and layers of factors that need to be taken into consideration, often due to behavioral shifting that in itself is dynamic and ever unfolding. Those layers extend through all the participants, the environment and their individual histories at any given time. In this instance, several rules of thumb this writer came to employ on the front line were disregarded.

The one the participants conceded they broke was separating in a time of elevated risk and tension. While a practitioner has to be informed, confident, aware and vigilant at all times, there are times when that bond with a shift partner has to be developed to an intuitive level with constant check-ins and reading of the situation before entertaining new actions. It is not enough to know the clients well. You must also know your shift partners well. It is important to use the down times to talk, share histories, philosophies, and experiences. Most important, again, as with the clients, is to strive to like and respect each other. For a senior practitioner one of the major frustrations has to be staff turnover which dilutes these very bonds.

The instance of a practicum student entering a program deserves special consideration. In my experience, a senior practitioner would be assigned to the student to guide and initiate that bonding experience. It was my understanding that the facility involved here had already had several senior staff leave to take work elsewhere. Were the facility equated with

³ <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/nightmares-plague-youth-centre-beating-victim-383054371.html>

an automobile, it was running on fumes. At the staffing level, a manager should have been on shift for both the student/practitioner situation and also the overall situation.

A program or facility coming to its end date is a program and facility in crisis. This writer has been through several and they are painful, disorienting, and anxious times. Valid and understandable concerns emerge, having to do with one's very living and the welfare of the clients involved. Those very bonds built up over time are being interrupted and broken. You often hear the expression, 'walking your talk' in this work. Once a date has been set for closure, a facility ceases to do that very thing. For the clients involved, their purpose for being there is ended; staff who conveyed the talk of the facility either have left or are distracted and forgetting their better judgment. A detachment can set in, sometimes, fatalistic. It appears to have done so in this instance. All the more need for those formally invested with the management and operation of the facility to step in and see it to a successful close. As this was a facility for male clients, male staff members and/or alternative staffing intended to maintain control certainly suggest themselves.

One of the key factors ignored in this instance appears to have been basic safety. The client aggressors here had more than a bat to work with. Billiard balls in socks, along with the rods from a foosball table made for convenient weapons. The facility needed to anticipate this and remove the potential harm they represented. For many facilities the provision of such games has a career determined regretfully by the lethal elements and population of the facility. Over my career I worked in two facilities that used their pool table as a handy place to fold and organize laundry. This extends to foosball, shuttle boards and any similar game. Lawn darts stood out especially, back in the day.

Finally, there was one aspect of this attack which compounds its tragedy, the gut feeling. In Alexandra Paul's article, Jackie Healey reported: "She recalled messaging her sister: 'This kid's really acting weird. He's never acted like this before. I feel really nervous'." It was that sister, Jamie Healey, who raced to the treatment centre that night. She was confronted with flashing lights from RCMP cruisers and emergency personnel." ⁴ Seasoned or senior practitioners learn to listen to their guts and weigh that message with their learning, the guidelines or rules and the situation. That these two practitioners had to fall back upon feigning death and passing out to end the attacks sharpens the abject tragedy of the incident. There was intention here. Child and youth care practice has always been dangerous yet with training, experience and plain hard work incidents of this nature have been held to an almost negligible level relative to the millions of interactions

⁴ <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/nightmares-plague-youth-centre-beating-victim-383054371.html>

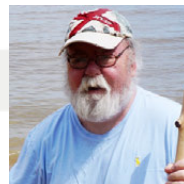
that take place on a daily basis. However, the degree of pathology of youth at risk has gradually crept up over time to become more lethal. It has become the convention to label such clients as complex and accordingly bring more supports into working with them. The use of a smart phone in this instance holds some promise going forward. That Jackie had to reach out to family and not to program supports displays a system that can only be called wanting. Increasingly in group and foster care, therapeutic supports are becoming necessary to meet complex demands.

The issue for this writer would be the competency and responsiveness of those supports. Many, at the supervisory level do share the 'on call' task, being available to offer assistance when it is necessary. As many of the association leaders noted in their letters, the system is in crisis, underfunded and under-developed subject to constant staff turnover and devolution. The very facility involved here was closing as it could not meet its mandate.

Since this incident, echoes of its blind and lethal hatred have erupted across the globe. Increasingly, those under 18 have indulged in outright terrorism in the vilest manner, often suicide attacks for suspect ideologies. More and more, these murderers have emerged from their home societies. Anyone going about their business now contemplates the uncertainty of where strikes will happen next. The public debate has grown to dominate the election in the United States, literally distilled down to 'love trumps hate'. Calls have gone out to the public to be vigilant and report suspect individuals. In Canada, the federal government strives to communicate and listen to the public, even to young people themselves on a panel reporting directly to the Prime Minister. Child and youth care practitioners are there on the front lines now, as they have been for decades, doing the very work of trumping hatred. It is time to double down on developing this healing profession to meet these challenges not by putting its most inexperienced forward without the supports necessary to confront such complex demands.

Garth Goodwin

retired after a 41-year career in both practice and as a database designer and administrator. Over 30 years of frontline practice he worked for both public/board and private agencies. He was the first recipient of the National Child and Youth Care Award in 1986. He nurtured the Child and Youth Care Workers Association of Manitoba through its formative years and became its representative to the Council of Canadian Child and Youth Care Associations. He has been privileged to be the witness and participant in significant events in CYC history and remains active as the communications support to the Council.



Information

Publishers

The CYC-Net Press

PO Box 23199, Claremont, 7735 SOUTH AFRICA

<http://press.cyc-net.org> email: info@press.cyc-net.org

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Correspondence

All correspondence should be addressed to: **The Editors, Relational Child and Youth Care Practice**

e-mail: rcycp@press.cyc-net.org

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