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**A Journal for those who live or work
with Children and Young People**



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Forging Forward Across Borders

Shemine Gulamhusein

It has been repeatedly shared on CYC-Net, Facebook discussion boards, Twitter feeds, and when chatting with colleagues, students, and practitioners, that the global pandemic has and continues to be challenging – testing the boundaries of our work as CYC practitioners, requiring us to get creative. In Phelan’s (2020) ‘Epidemic Positives’ article, he noted his curiosity in how CYC would work in virtual spaces, continue to build and sustain relationships with the children, youth, and families we work closely with, and the creative ways we would navigate the complexity of the pandemic. I have been fortunate and privileged that, for me, the pandemic brought with it time to read, to ponder, to slow down, and to create. The greatest hurdle I faced was the inability and privilege to jump on a plane and fly to where my heart desires. I am sure I’m not alone!

The 2019-2020 academic year was my first year as a full-time CYC faculty member. Shortly before the world went into the first of many lockdowns, a colleague and I, alongside twenty-five third-year undergraduate students had just returned to Edmonton Alberta, Canada, from an international trip to Ireland and Scotland a flagship global perspectives course MacEwan University has offered for over a decade. Like many of the obstacles and opportunities being an emerging scholar brings with it, one of my first



challenges was to re-create a parallel course for third-year students who did not travel to Ireland and Scotland.

With the support of the CYC team at MacEwan, I was able to develop a course that would encourage students to explore agencies and organization in and around the Edmonton area that offered services to marginalized, racialized, and minoritized community members. With the changing dynamics of how we connect, relate, and support one another in virtual spaces, there was flexibility to be creative, innovative, and to travel with students in virtual ways. The greatest barrier was time zone differences. The economic status of students, the time commitments and balancing act of studies, work and personal lives, and other limiting factors that may have prevented students from physically traveling with their peers to Ireland and Scotland no longer existed. Students, in a way, were now on a level playing field AND the course I laboured over was going to be offered to all third-year students. For the privileged, the pandemic has been a blessing in disguise.

With a little creativity, technology, and the support of practitioners and scholars from Australia, Canada, East Africa, Ireland, Scotland, the UK, and the USA – students were offered a unique travel experience across virtual borders. The course, beyond my expectation, was rich in dialogue, questioned colonial and racial injustices, uncovered common humanity, and offered an opportunity for students to challenge the ways they interacted with the people they work with. As an emerging scholar, my network expanded beyond imaginable boundaries. When attempting to name the joys that accompanied the restrictions, I found myself collaborating with a colleague, Caroline Coyle, in Ireland, at the University of the Shannon (previously known as Athlone Institute of Technology) and forming a Global Perspectives in Social Care and Child and Youth Care collective.



The collective, born out of the pandemic and our keen interest in how practitioners and scholars shifted their practices and teaching to accommodate new ways of living together apart, led to a wonderful half day symposium during the 1st Global Perspectives in Social Care / Child and Youth Care symposium, titled 'Reimagining Social Care / CYC Practice through Arts, Nature, Spirituality, Education and Other (ANSEO)' (<https://sites.google.com/view/socialcarecyc>), a group of nearly thirty came together with storytelling, poetry, radio, podcasting, nature-based activities, and Indigenous knowledges. We learned how technology offered opportunities to enhance connections, how local parks became therapeutic spaces, how the radio waves and music shared provoked emotion, and how people have returned to ancestral practices to remain connected and cared for.

My take away? First, I now continuously assess how my courses create equity between students: how do I intentionally create learning opportunities that are equally accessible? Second, creativity and the willingness to engage in 'risky' innovated ways of educating and being can lead to unimaginable opportunities. Third, the field of CYC is vast, crosses geographical and virtual borders with lots to learn, share, and integrate in each of our own practices and lives. And finally, I was reminded to put the "fun" back into my work. I encourage each of my students to find what drives their passion for the field and to let the theory and ethics of the field guide their practice.

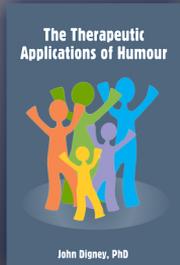
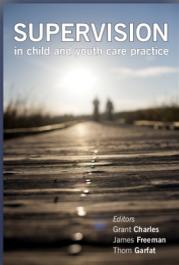
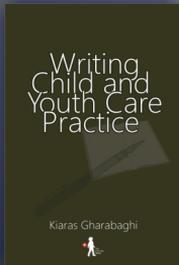
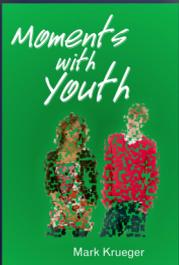
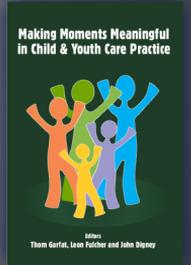
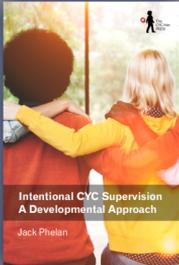
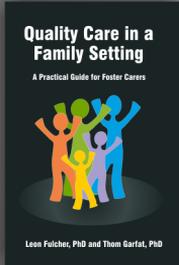
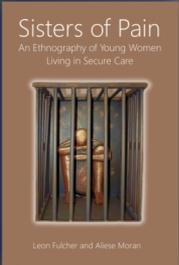
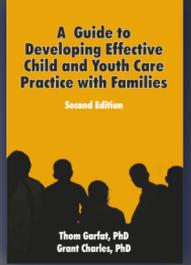
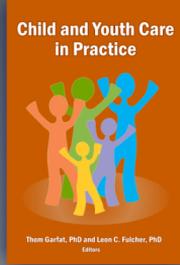
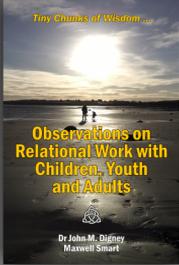
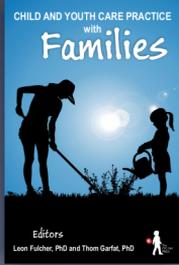
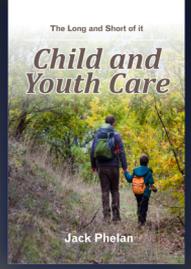
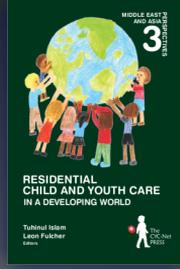
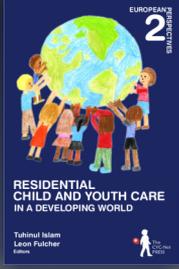
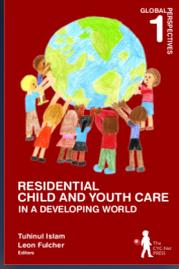
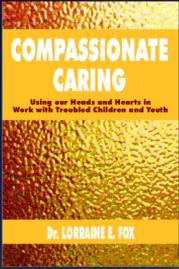
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They Shouldn't Be Here

Kiaras Gharabaghi

Over the past twenty years or so, I have quite consistently been coaching teams of child and youth care practitioners in residential and day treatment settings. For the most part, it has been a joy to do this work. Overwhelmingly, the practitioners I have met in this work have been wonderful people trying their very best to meet what they believe to be the needs of the young people in their service settings. The kinds of issues and themes that come up frequently during my gatherings with the practitioner teams include the kinds of things that have forever presented challenges. For example, every few years the same issues emerge about how to control behaviours, how much and in what ways young people ought to have a voice in their settings, whether or not young people should have access to Wi-Fi and mobile phones, issues around consistency, racism, gender normativity, peer dynamics, family involvement and many more. I am always happy to discuss any of these issues and themes, and I find that it is much less important to make decisions about these things or to come up with the *right* answer as it is to engage these things from as many perspectives as possible. Good practice flows from whatever engages individual practitioners enough to remain in conversation with their team members, and to remain open about possible approaches and ways of doing things that might be different from however these things were thought about and done previously.

There is, however, one issue that seems especially challenging, particularly in residential care and treatment settings and in day treatment



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(special education) settings. For some reason, practitioners keep coming back to this issue and struggle with resolving it either theoretically or in practice. And yet, in many ways, I think this issue is of such foundational importance that it really does require some level of resolution for good practice to even be possible. I can't really name this issue, but I can describe it, so here it goes.

In almost all settings, there are periods of time when things are going well, and other periods of time when things are not going particularly well. How we define what it means for things to be going well versus not going well is itself, of course, a matter of perspective. In my experience, most teams think things are going well when the environment itself is relatively calm most of the time, when young people living or studying in that environment more or less abide by the rules, and when practitioners feel that they have positive connections with those young people. In other words, things are going well when there is not too much happening. These periods of time where not much is happening inevitably are interrupted eventually. Almost always, the interruption is about one or two young people doing things differently than all the other young people, challenging the rules, having behavioural incidents, breaking things, or generally requiring enormous effort from the practitioners to maintain some semblance of order in the setting. The disruptive young people, who often are relatively recently admitted to the setting, almost always have considerable instability in their lives. For example, they may have experienced multiple previous placements, or there is a great deal of conflict in the family, or there has been repeated worker turnover amongst the workers assigned to work with the young person individually, or with the family. Sometimes, such young people are labelled developmentally or emotionally in ways that the practitioners believe to be outside of the



mandate of their setting. Before long, the talk in the team turns toward questioning the appropriateness of the placement: 'This young person has needs that cannot be met here'; or 'until there is some family work done, the young person cannot adjust to this program'; or, my personal favourite, 'there is no treatment happening with this young person; they should not be here'.

These kinds of conversations happen amongst practitioners not because those practitioners want to blame the young person for their troubles; and also, not because they don't care or don't like the young person. They happen, most of the time, for two very specific reasons: First, because the young person has impacted the expectations of practitioners about what their workday will look like; and second, because practitioners worry about how the young person will impact the wonderful treatment progress of the other young people in the setting.

What I always find fascinating about these moments is that we work very hard to frame our belief that a young person shouldn't be here in the language of treatment. Whether it is about the needs of the young person, the dynamics of their family, or simply that treatment isn't happening the way practitioners might envision that it should, we are fundamentally framing the problem to be a treatment issue. I believe that this fascination with treatment is the source of serious misunderstandings about child and youth care practice and about being with young people in relational ways. I want to cite exactly five reasons for my belief, and if I had more time, I would expand on these a little more. Since I don't have that time, I will simply state my five reasons and hope that if you are currently involved in one of those discussions about why a young person shouldn't be in your setting, you will reflect a little on the following:



First, the needs of young people, no matter how they may behave, respond, or impact a particular setting, are always met. It doesn't matter what we do as practitioners; young people of any age will always do what they feel they must to meet their needs. The needs that are not being met are the needs of the practitioners and the needs of the setting. Let's make sure we don't confuse these with the needs of the young people.

Second, there are many ways to think about what we mean by treatment. One way that I think is especially congruent with relational child and youth care practice is that we work with young people to explore pathways to healing. When we say no treatment is happening, we are saying that we stopped exploring pathways to healing. That seems more on us than on the young people.

Third, we have for many years now convinced ourselves of a narrative that focuses on centering the young person. We think of our practice as child or youth centered. It is not. In fact, our practice is program-centered. Conversations about young people who should not be here are conversations about protecting our programs. We don't really mind excluding young people who challenge our program; we can just replace them with another young person, and in fact, we do that on a regular basis. Our focus is always the program, which we center in our imagination of where we work and that centers us in our practice. Very few practitioners respond to a question about *where* they work with 'in relationship'.

Fourth, as soon as we start conversations about whether or not a young person should be here, we almost always find lots of evidence or good reasons why they should not. It seems that we are always right, and that young people confirm that we are right by behaving accordingly. This dynamic is predictable, because young people always know that you don't think they should be here before you do. Don't kid yourself; by the time you



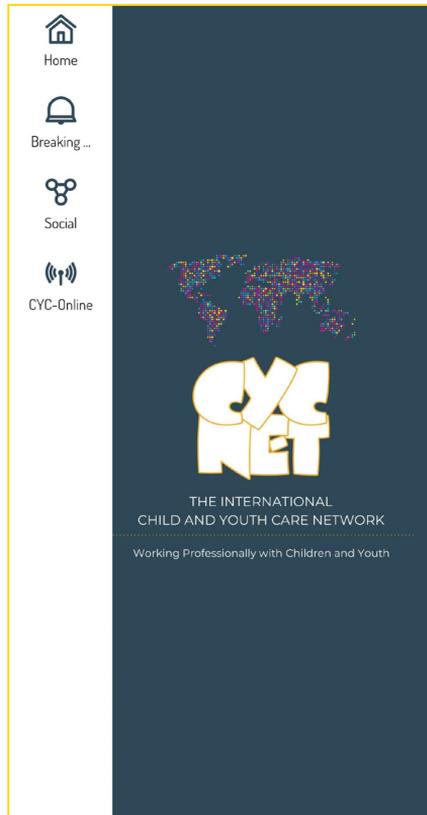
verbalize that you question whether a young person should be here, you have already provided a thousand non-verbal indications of that belief to the young person.

Fifth, do you ever wonder what 'here' means? Is it a location? A space for activity? A space of relational connections? What exactly are we designating as the 'here' where the young person should not be? Could it be that the 'here' is really a reference to you? And perhaps the ownership you assert about this space? Can you transfer this same logic to some other contexts? Should immigrants who don't adjust to your way of being not be 'here'? Should racialized people who don't perform whiteness not be 'here'? Who else shouldn't be 'here'? And what healing will be possible in spaces from which we banish people? Perhaps our first instinct was right after all – there is no treatment happening 'here'. We made sure of that.

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Indigenous Data, Indigenous Worlds

Doug Magnuson

This past summer a statistic about Indigenous peoples in Canada was passed around my School, in support of a claim about the exclusion of Indigenous people in higher education. The historical exclusion is real, but the statistic about contemporary participation was misleading, and a quick search of Statistics Canada data turns up the accurate data. Yet no one challenged this statistic, at least publicly.

This is not surprising, given the outpouring of empathy for excluded groups in recent years and the critiques of quantitative data as intrinsically racist. There has been a lot of racist research, obviously. But Walter and Suina, Indigenous researchers, argue that equating all research and data, especially quantitative data, with racist research and data is a mistake.

“... this critique, in its valid emphasis of the harm wrought by positivism, tends to scoop up all quantitative research as methodologically similar.” – (Walter & Suina, 2019)

The assumption that data about Indigenous accomplishment always shows exclusion and oppression is a problem. It is common for CYC and Social Work literature to cite the same depressing statistics and to justify one’s own positionality, practices, beliefs, and proposed studies on the basis of the “deficits” of Indigenous peoples. Surprisingly, we have reached



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a point in which the racists and the anti-racists sometimes agree with each other, and this might be a signal that something is outdated about our interpretations. We might want to be reminded that,

“Within this, the Indigene remains the object, caught in a numbered bind, viewed through the straitjacketing lens of deficit”. – (Walter & Suina, 2019, p. 236).

Fortunately, many Indigenous scholars have already begun to address these issues, including the assumption that Indigenous people do not use numbers. For example, Courtney Skye (2020) of the Yellowhead Institute addressed the pandemic:

“The public has never been more saturated by data – number of new cases, number of new deaths, flattening curves, best case projections and so on – yet there is a remarkable absence of clear, public data on how this pandemic is affecting Indigenous peoples.”

Instead of questioning statistical methods, she called for more statistical data produced by Indigenous people.

Walter and Suina (2019) criticized the assumption that only qualitative methods were appropriate for Indigenous people; they argued that Indigenous methods and data, including quantitative data and methods, would tell a more complete story of Indigenous ways of being. They suggest that numeracy has always been a part of Indigenous cultures. Their recommendations were to a) cultivate technical skills among community members related to survey development, data collection,



analysis, and reporting, b) build comfort and understanding regarding research methods among tribal partners, c) advocate for Indigenous research methodologies and Indigenous data sovereignty” (pp. 239-240).

In view of the contributions of Black and Hispanic quantitative researchers and mathematicians to quantitative methods and science over the past 100 years, it would be strange – and unfortunate – if Indigenous people were somehow excluded on the basis of the assumption of innate or cultural differences. Instead, Walter and Suina (2019) say

“... there is broad agreement on the need for data, which meet Indigenous data needs and aspirations. These include, but are not limited to, data that disrupt deficit narratives, data that are disaggregated, data that reflect the embodied social, political, historical, and cultural realities of Indigenous people’s lives, as Indigenous peoples, and data that address Indigenous nation re-building agendas” (p 236).

One good example of this is the dissertation by Eva Jewell (2018), examining Indigenous support for governance apart from the Indian Act in Canada, using logistic regression.

These would be good ideas child and youth care – not just Indigenous researchers. It would be helpful to have more studies of child and youth care life worlds that use quantitative methods. It would be helpful if practitioners and evaluators were numerically facile. Counseling psychology, anthropology and family sociology all make use of quantitative as well as qualitative methods, to their benefit. Child and youth care has much work to do, from encouraging numeracy among clients from excluded groups to using mathematics to improve the field.



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‘Zoning In’ to Daily Life Events that Facilitate Therapeutic Change in Child and Youth Care Practice

Leon Fulcher

Introduction

Therapeutic Use of Daily Life Events with young people in out-of-home care is frequently a policy aspiration of Human Service organizations, often without clear appreciation for what it means to live with, and influence the lives of, challenged and challenging young people during important periods in their lives. The reader here is invited to ‘zone-in’ on a handful of Child and Youth Care principles (Garfat & Fulcher, 2011) that assist Child and Youth Care Practitioners to enter ‘*zones of proximal development*’ in shared life spaces with particular young people as Carers in designated out-of-home placements. Duty of care obligations and responsibilities impact on a variety of ‘zones’ that determine whether therapeutic use of daily life events actually provide opportunities for young people to achieve developmental outcomes that matter during their placement(s) in out-of-home care. Implications for practice and supervision of out-of-home care practices are briefly examined.



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Principle 1: Participate with People as They Live Their Lives

At Conference Workshops or Keynote Addresses, Henry Maier used to remind Child and Youth Care Workers, Supervisors, and Managers that BEFORE a word gets spoken, the whole Sensorimotor stage of cognitive development has been activated. Maier (1979) further argued that Specialized Behaviour Training with young people is most successful when Bodily Comfort, Differences, Rhythmicity, Predictability, and Dependability components of his Core of Care have been activated in daily life spaces with peers (Smith, Fulcher & Doran, 2013). Maier showed how relationships play a significant role in determining whether a young person achieves developmental outcomes that matter to that young person, and to her or his family members and community. Social capabilities and competencies build upon personal attachments. Nurturing self-management and enriching a child or young person's behavioural repertoires are closely linked to quality relationships with Carers.

Principle 2: Working in the Now

The Child and Youth Care field has become increasingly aware that learning is a social process rather than just, or even primarily, an individual, deep-brain learning process. Social learning happens in groups, or as Maier noted, at the very least through relationships. While contemporary Western psychological theory focused more and more on individual deep-brain learning processes, the Russian psychologist Vygotsky was arguing that learning and cognitive development takes place firstly on a social plane before it is subsequently incorporated into a young person's cognitive schema. Knowledge and meaning are socially constructed by the particular parties involved in the social learning process – teachers or out-of-home carers and learners – rather than information merely transmitted



from one person to the other, as more traditional views of teaching and learning might suggest (Stremmel, 1993).

Through the assistance of a more capable person, a child is able to learn skills or aspects of a skill that go beyond that child's actual developmental or maturational level, such that development follows the young person's potential to learn.

Principle 3: Doing 'With', Not 'For' or 'To'

From 1926-30, Vygotsky investigated the development of higher cognitive functions of logical memory, selective attention, decision making, and language comprehension. This young Russian psychologist studied three different angles: first trying to understand the ways in which humans use objects as aides in memory and reasoning; second, how children acquire higher cognitive functions during learning; and third, ways in which learning trajectories are shaped by different social and cultural patterns of interaction. A central theme in Vygotsky's work related to what he called the '*zone of proximal development*.' Essentially, children or young people grow and can be supported in their personal and social growth towards the next stage of development through the guidance of appropriate adults or more skilled peers.

This '*zone of proximal development*' is socially mediated and is shaped through dialogue and relationships in daily life events in their life space. Adults may be accorded a role as 'more knowledgeable others' in working with children, to help these young people to identify and develop personal and social skills. Peers also play a role in mediating personal and cognitive development, and especially social development (Emond, 2000).



Principle 4: Responsively Developmental

Vygotsky's idea of '*zone of proximal development*' lends itself to working with groups of young people because it is fundamentally social, and also broadly educational rather than individual and problem-focused. It reinforces the importance of relationships and thus provides a robust psychological underpinning for the therapeutic use of daily life events in social education or social pedagogy. Tragically, Vygotsky died of tuberculosis in 1934, at the age of 37, in Moscow, with much of his seminal work unpublished until the 1980s. Building later on the '*zone of proximal development*' idea, Eichsteller and Holthoff (2010) concluded that learning takes place when young people actually leave their comfort zone to explore wider dimensions of their environment, thereby extending their learning zone to the extent that young people review capabilities and extend the potential limits of their abilities. Pushed too far, young people enter a panic zone, where lack of knowledge and understanding – along with resultant anxiety – often inhibits their ability to learn.

Alongside young people, Child and Youth Care Practitioners encourage them to step out of their comfort zones and into their personal learning zone.

Principle 5: Intentionality of Action

To create opportunities where young people can engage with optimal learning opportunities, she or he needs to experience a degree of safety and trust in their learning moment. The level of challenge each young person faces must offer a manageable fit with how they view their own capabilities. It is here that their '*zone of proximal development*' assumes considerable meaning in practice. Think of how many times as a Child and Youth Care Practitioner one might have heard a young person say '*I'm in*



the Zone! This may have been around a sporting activity such as basketball or football, or an art, sculpturing, or photography activity! For that reason, Child and Youth Care Practitioners must remain attentive to this other 'zone' where opportunities for learning and achievement of developmental outcomes that matter can be nurtured intentionally. One might intentionally offer and arrange events and experiences that balance the right amount of challenge with the offer of learning opportunities, enabling children and young people to achieve incrementally and at their own appropriate pace and level. Experiences of achieving developmental outcomes that matter provide a relational platform for continuing success. As Powis *et al* (1989) noted, a young person who lacks confidence in all areas of her or his life may just need achievement in one area from which to gain self-confidence sufficiently to shift personal attitudes about her or himself and experience enhanced performance in other areas of their life.

Therapeutic Use of 'The Zone' in Daily Life Events with Young People

Child and Youth Care Practitioners can help children and young people in out-of-home care to explore opportunities where learning isn't a painful or frustrating experience. Carers might begin more directly with what really interests this young person and how – together – might we build on those interests to create realistic and achievable learning opportunities through daily life events we share whilst living together.

Young people quite readily and willingly respond to personal coaching activities from a Carer with whom they feel respect- fully engaged. This highlights the importance of Child and Youth Care Practitioners connecting pro-actively with each child or young person received into out-of-home care. It means engaging without waiting for that young person to



make the first move. In the absence of such intentionality on the part of each Child and Youth Care Practitioner, it is easy for negative peer group cultures to emerge which undervalue education (basic reading, writing, and arithmetic) and survival skills for daily living as young adults.

Learning to enjoy and achieve begins through relationships that have personal meaning for each young person. Enjoyment and achievement are not rigid expectations in Child and Youth Care Practice. Instead, enjoyment and personal achievements are natural results when we engage and operate in relationships that build with intentionality through each young person's '*zone of proximal development.*'

Within such relationships – encountered in the present and unencumbered by past feelings – young people find opportunities to experience themselves in new ways. These new ways of being in their world begin to weave together daily life experiences and personal stories that reinforce themes of competence, mastery, trustworthiness, happiness and, perhaps most importantly, hope (Phelan, 2001). During such moments, communication frequently occurs through the senses and shared experiences in daily living, not simply through words. Child and Youth Care Practitioners may recall times when they engaged with young people through arduous physical activities, such as a long cycle ride or a challenging hill walk. During such times, communication is often non-verbal, based more around presence, relationship, and 'doing or being with'. Such shared experiences offer powerful opportunities for identifying and engaging in teachable moments in this young person's '*zone of proximal development.*'



Supervision of Carers Working in ‘The Zone’ with Young People

A variety of ‘zones’ require consideration in the daily and weekly supervision of Agency Carers and Supervisors seeking to apply this ‘*zone of proximal development*’ idea in their daily work with young people in out-of-home care.

Zoning In

Effective supervisors ensure that Carers are zoning in on what are important responses with young people. Responsive practices that nurture developmental achievements and promote resilience amongst young people in out-of-home care involves more than reacting to a young person’s behaviour, or the behaviours of a group of youths.

Zone Offence

Good supervisors encourage Carers to influence the Personal Care and Education Plan, and to use it as a guide. Responsive practices involve intervening in a planned manner which considers each young person’s current developmental stage and needs, and the context which relocated that young person into this out-of-home care placement.

Zone Defence

Thoughtful supervisors encourage Carers to consider alternative Plans B and C so that when one approach doesn’t seem to be working, there is always a back-up plan. This helps with responding with each young person placed in out-of-home care in a manner consistent with how she or he experiences her or himself at any moment in time.



Zone Press

The more Carers take account of particular developmental requirements each young person brings with them into out-of-home care, the more responsive each Carer will be in their pro-active use of daily life events with that young person. Stay close to that young person and their 'Zone'. This matters throughout that young person's stay in out-of-home care, however short or long.

End Zone

Health and welfare services promote 'evidence-based practices' with children and young people in out-of-home care. Few of these services attend closely to 'practice-based evidence' (Parsonson, 2012). Responsive supervision reinforces 'good enough caring in each young person's zone of proximal development'. The idea is to address the particular developmental needs and achievements that each young person brings with them into out-of-home care and ensure that they continue to achieve throughout their placement(s)!

Zoned-Out

Attentive supervision picks up immediately when it seems that Carers are not in sync with a young person in their care. When a placement is disrupted or breaks down because of less than expected change, so it is that personal care and treatment plans are commonly amended without any systematic scrutiny of whether there is evidence to show whether this placement was addressing the needs of this particular youth in the first place.



Loading Zone

Any agency which accepts local government commissioning or enters into purchase-of-service contracts to provide out-of-home care, legally accepts a duty of care mandate from the State – through legislation which lays down criteria around which the supervision of each young person in out-of-home placement and their conditions of residence are reviewed (Fulcher, 2000).

No Parking Zone

The duty of care mandate for out-of-home placements offers each child, young person, and family a minimum guarantee not to be harmed or made unsafe through ‘as therapeutic as possible’ use of daily life events with young people placed with designated out-of-home Carers. No parking zones extend to offices and to hiding away completing administrivia!

Tow-Away Zone

Supervision of each Carer requires regular and also ‘as needed’ contact so that agencies demonstrate accountability and compliance around issues of personal liability as well as vicarious liability (that which holds agency management liable through failure to supervise) for the duration of each young person’s stay in out-of-home care.

Safety Zone

Telephone and on-site supervision can be supplemented through Carer Groups, Peer and Buddy-Supervision, Telephone Ladders, and Team Supervision. Each of the Child and Youth Care Practice principles highlighted at the start of this article also apply in Carer Supervision.



Re-Fueling Zone

Whether by telephone or video conference, on-line forums, face-to-face meetings with individuals, couples, foster families or groups and teams of Carers, weekly and monthly supervision needs to review particular accounts of how Carers participated with young people as they lived their lives during recent days and weeks.

Speed Zone

Invite Carers to slow down, share, and reflect upon actual scenarios from recent encounters with the young person(s) in their care, inviting detailed accounts of scenarios when they experienced working in 'The Zone' with this particular young person in the past few days – and how these experiences left the Carer feeling since.

Zone of Proximal Development

Actively explore a couple of examples involving learning moments where this Carer entered 'The Zone' in their proximal attachment role, willingly able to share accounts about 'Doing With', not 'For' or 'To' a youth in their care.



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No Passing Zone

Supervision may usefully explore recent stories and concrete examples which show how this Carer demonstrated her or his capacity to engage in responsively developmental caring with the young person in their care during the past seven days. Be specific and don't let key themes slide by as unimportant. This key supervisory theme explores how the Carer has consciously entered, or attempted to enter, this young person's '*zone of proximal development*' with the aim of nurturing learning outcomes.

Restricted Zone

Good supervision explores how much time is spent in an office or with writing up Care notes when opportunities are there for engaging with young people. Supervision helps to nurture and reinforce intentionality of action amongst out-of-home Carers. The aim is to instil a duty of care message that 're-active care is a no-fly zone'. Carers thus learn that they are expected to re-frame daily life experiences with young people in out-of-home care into potential opportunities for pro-active learning for life as a young adult. Here the Supervisor is working in each Carer's '*zone of proximal development*.'

Some Closing Thoughts on Comfort Zones

A central premise underpinning the therapeutic use of daily life events involves professional recognition that 'the other 23 hours' (Trieschman, Whittaker & Brendtro, 1969) are every bit as important as the hour of one-to-one counselling or episode of behaviour management training that gets mandated in a young person's personal care and treatment plan. The 24-hour curriculum provides powerful opportunities for learning. That curriculum extends well beyond formal classroom experiences. There is



research evidence showing how the educational attainments of poorer children actually deteriorates and these children start falling behind their peers during school holiday periods, when these children aren't at school and are living in social environments with restricted opportunities. Such deterioration is less discernible during the school term (Alexander et al, 2001). Findings such as these should encourage Child and Youth Care Practitioners to more actively create and nurture learning opportunities in the proximal zone of development for each child or young person in their care. This holds, whether that young person is richer or poorer, and it needs to remain Carers' focus, throughout the course of that young person's life in out-of-home care. Whether a young person is living in foster care, in supervised kinship care, in receipt of after-school care, engaged in a care leaver programme, receiving in-patient hospital care, attending boarding school, or committed by law to a supervised residential group care centre, each young person's '*zone of proximal development*' merits respect and engagement. When Carers aren't 'working in the zone' with young people, it's not surprising to find youths such as these 'zoned out' from whatever Carers are trying to do. Take time 'outside your Comfort Zone' to reflect on how '*zones of proximal development*' – that relational place nearest to our point of connection with a young person – impacts daily in child and youth care work.

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which evaluated de-institutionalisation policies in the residential care of children in 11 countries.

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Treatment Plans

Jack Phelan

CYC practitioners spend a lot of time and effort creating Treatment Plan documents to support the young people and families in our care. CYC educational programs generally devote many hours of instruction to preparing students for this professional task, and field placement supervisors and seminar leaders evaluate the ability of practicum students to write clear and focused treatment strategies.

I have written at other times about the futility of telling other people how to improve their lives when we use our own perspective and logic to create self-improvement strategies, but treatment planning and discussions can be very useful if the practitioner can really see the world from the other person's point of view and has great humility about their own cherished life truths.

However, I want to move away from this type of professional effort and ask CYC practitioners to consider another type of treatment planning. I would like to recommend a shift in focus from worrying about how to help the young person to improve their effectiveness to looking at personal goals for improving one's professional skills and abilities. We practitioners seem to have no reluctance to advise young people and families on ways to change and learn new ways of living well, so it should be logical to all of us that setting goals regularly is a useful strategy.

My own belief is that most helpers would be more successful if they focused on changing themselves for the better, since it will naturally result



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in improved professional performance, rather than focusing on changing the young person or family system.

CYC supervisors are responsible for the effectiveness of their staff members and building staff treatment plans which are co-created, regularly reviewed and updated, with clear, realistic, measurable goals should be an obvious part of the supervisor's job description. Since each practitioner is unique (much like the young people and families), this treatment plan would not merely be a re-stating of job description details, but a developmentally accurate and relationally based approach.

Reviewing this plan can mirror the time frames we expect of our program recipients, every 90-180 days, with a conference type discussion, perhaps involving other relevant input providers. Team members, other relevant professionals and even young people or family members may be invited to attend.

This may seem like an unusual, even radical proposal, but we expect the more fragile and less personally invested people we serve to cooperate willingly in this type of discussion as a mandatory part of the process of healthy change.

Becoming a competent, fully functional CYC practitioner requires about five years of experience, learning new perspectives and ideas through reading, discussion, training and good supervision. It is too easy to stagnate after one or two years of experience, particularly since supervision can be focused on basic program behaviors. Challenging oneself to get smarter, more empathic, reflective and articulate about one's practice is the task of every professional, and this is a long journey, not merely the goal of getting past a six-month probationary trial period.

CYC supervisors should be strongly promoting professional growth and increased sophistication in every member of their team, not setting a



minimal performance standard that satisfies some basic program mandate.

Since we already see the benefit of performance reviews and treatment plans for our program recipients, it should be a small step to add this methodology to our staff development efforts.

JACK PHELAN is a regular contributor to CYC-Online. He is the author of *Intentional CYC Supervision: A Developmental Approach* and *Child and Youth Care: The Long and Short of It*, both available through the CYC-Net Press. Jack teaches Child and Youth Care at Grant MacEwan College in Alberta, Canada. Learn more at <https://cyc-net.org/People/people-phelan.html>



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Putting the Garden to Bed

Hans Skott-Myhre

It is fall here in the American South which means that it gets up to 80F in the day and down to the mid 50's F at night. The light has taken on that tone that I associate with onset of cooler weather and some of the leaves have begun to fall, although most of the trees are still green. It is warm enough to take the boat out, but cool enough to start to think about putting the garden to bed.

We don't have a large vegetable garden, but we do have many flower beds and flowering trees. The azaleas are out now, along with the mums, roses, hibiscus, various bedding flowers, and the errant gardenia. The tomatoes, cucumbers, eggplant, peppers and basil are finishing. There are random asparagus stalks. The first of the watermelons is ripe (at least we think so). The lawn is starting to look like it is ready to go dormant and the hedges may not take many more trims before they slow down. The River Birch is dropping leaves like crazy and you can hear the hickory and oak nuts falling through the trees like mini artillery fusillades when the wind blows. The Hurricane season is sending us its rainy edges for days at a time, but the sun is also shining more clearly with a drop in summer humidity. All in all, fall is setting in slowly but with certainty.

What this means for me as a gardener, is that there are a series of chores I need to complete before the first frost. To begin, I will need to be sure to weed thoroughly to eradicate those weeds that will overwinter if I don't get them now (of course I never really get them, but it gives me some comfort to try). I also need to figure out what plants to bring inside and



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overwinter and where I will put them, so that the house doesn't simply start to look like a disorganized florists shop.

I also need to be careful that I don't compost any weeds or plants that I don't want to thrive in my garden next year. Some weeds will overwinter in the compost and come back gangbusters if I am not careful. I will need to be raking, shredding, bagging, generally trying to stay on top of the leaves falling from the forty or so hardwoods in my backyard. In short, fall signals a turning of seasons, as well as a turn in my practices and daily activities.

As I was sitting and looking out at the lake this morning, it occurred to me that it might be useful to think about my CYC garden as well. Given my age, I am entering the fall of my life which includes my involvement with CYC. I have no plans to retire any time soon, so I am hoping for a long and pleasant fall with loads of resplendent colors and cool and pleasant weather. As fall arrives though, I want to begin to think about putting my CYC garden to bed. Unlike the time frames involved in closing my physical garden, I am hopeful that the process of putting my CYC garden to bed will take decades and not weeks. That said, I will also be putting the garden to bed in a way that I hope will allow new gardeners, who are entering the spring of their CYC careers, to take advantage of the bulbs I have left in the ground to come up next season, as well as plants that have wintered over to be replanted so they can bloom again. I am also concerned with trying to weed as best as I can, so that I leave as few invasive plants and pernicious weeds as possible. At minimum I hope to leave a small field guide that will allow the next gardeners to at least be able to identify the weeds from the flowers and the pests that can destroy the vegetables and fruits that could nourish your work for years to come.

When I was small, I would watch my mother gardening and was sometimes quite puzzled by what she designated as weeds. After all, many



“weeds” have very pretty flowers. So, I asked her one day how she knew a weed from a flower. She responded quite quickly that a weed was a flower growing where you didn’t want it.

I have thought about this quite a lot over the years. The decisions we make about what plants to uproot and what plants we choose to nurture is more complicated than we might think. In our training as gardeners, we learn what is a weed and what is a flower. But the distinction does get muddy at times. In some climates, certain ground covers, such as creeping jenny, are considered a very desirable garden planting to prevent weeds, but in other parts of the country, it is considered a very invasive weed that can crowd out and take over a flower garden. Same plant, but very different growth patterns in varying ecologies.

What one gardener considers a weed, another seeks out as a flower. And it is not simply a differentiation made based on benefit to a particular garden. Some ecologically oriented gardeners make the case for avoiding any non-native plants and planting in a way that re-asserts the indigenous ecology of the land being cultivated. Others argue against any sculpting of the landscape according to European colonial garden plantings with lawns, trimmed shrubs, and contained beds of flowers and vegetables.

Indeed, a great deal of what I have been taught about how to manage my garden is a direct inheritance of colonial patterns of land management. One of the key elements in the colonial project of land theft in North America was the transformation of the ecological landscape of North America into something that mimicked, as closely as possible, the way the land looked in Europe. Prairies and forests became farms, towns were laid out along European diagrams, and houses had gardens that followed the plat and style of European plantings. The land was transformed and filled



with non-native invasive species of plants and animals that created a continent in large part unrecognizable from its origins.

This was certainly the style and pattern of gardening that I was trained in and that still informs the way I manage the small piece of land I find myself stewarding. I think of this when I am weeding, cultivating, shaping, and trimming the plants, trees, and land to meet my sense of what I consider aesthetically pleasing. I have taken to using more native plants and trees in my yard. But I still retain some degree of ambivalence about the colonizing effect I have on a land, that left to itself, would populate itself differently. Of course, part of the problem is that where I live, there has been so much cultivation of non-native species that even if left alone, the land would easily be overtaken by invasive plants that might well choke out the native plants I am so carefully cultivating. So, like many things, it is an ambivalent and messy process of entanglement between me, the land, and the plants that grow there.

I have to say that I feel quite similarly about my CYC garden. The efforts I have made to shape and cultivate what Gharabaghi calls the Purpose and Practice of the field have all kinds of ambivalent edges. We have, as CYC practitioners and scholars, a double inheritance that stems from the ways in which our field was developed in concert with the project of colonialism, while also drawing on counter-narratives rooted in different European philosophical traditions and humanistic sets of practices. For a very long time, the development of our field was the province of settler colonialist thinkers and practitioners. More recently, that has begun to shift with more scholarship and practices being engaged that are rooted in the voices of Indigenous peoples and People of Color. In addition, while there have always been women who have made significant contributions to our field from its inception, lately there has been more inclusion of overtly feminist voices. Similarly, I have been very pleased to see significant contributions



from the LGBTQ community as well. Finally, it is exciting to see neurologically diverse and differently abled narratives entering the mix.

All of that would seem to indicate that our CYC cultural ecology has been shifting and becoming richer and more diverse. We have a long way to go of course, but our garden is becoming filled with a increasing array of strong and vibrant plantings that have begun to entangle themselves into the more colonial planting patterns. There is a process of cross fertilization and pollination of CYC purpose and practice into what I find to be very beautiful new growth.

My own CYC garden includes a constant inclusion of these contributions and I hope that I can help to spread some of these practices, ceremonies, and thoughts throughout my work to winter over. I hope that the entanglements of these rich and vibrant traditions and ways of knowing will produce hybrids of thought and practice that I cannot imagine. Of course, the beauty and power of these ways of knowing and practice nurtured and cultivated by women, the LGBTQ community, Indigenous peoples and People of Color have their own force aside from my gardening efforts. To some degree these gardens are the future and every effort should be made to sustain and support their proliferation. Every garden needs space and nourishment and I am hopeful that CYC will open broad expanses of the field to the sustenance of these efforts.

I also am interested in wintering over some things I have had in my CYC garden for many years. First, there is the particularly difficult relationship plant. This is a notoriously fickle planting that is both incredibly hardy and capable of dying back at a moments notice. It is often mistaken for a similar plant, that is actually a invasive species called social capital. Both plantings look the same at first, since they both require an investment of time and energy by the gardener, that builds trust. But relational plantings



build trust as a primary nutrient of unpredictable growth and development that opens the native capacities of the planting. While social capital turns the compost of trust towards conformity and structure, trimming and shaping the planting to fit in the garden as conceived by the gardener. If you see the social capital weed, it has to be taken out by the root and destroyed, or it will take over and choke out the actual relationship plant. The good news is, that while the relationship plant can appear to die or go dormant, it is always creating rhizome under the ground. As a result, it often pops up where you least expect it. The discerning gardener always keeps an eye out for its appearance in the early spring of any garden.

Another one of my favorites is the radical youthwork vine. Incredibly hardy, but considered by colonial gardeners to be a weed, this vine can bloom with many different shapes and colors of blossoms, as well as unpredictable seed pods, and rhizomes. For the more traditional CYC gardener, this vine can appear to be a distraction that can draw attention away from the rest of garden. But, if you know how the vine works, you understand that it is always communicating with all the other plants, like the mycelium communicates between trees in a forest. It surveys its environment for threats and opportunities and passes these along the lines of connectivity that always operate between the plants. It is important to note that only the plants can read these messages and they are opaque to the traditional shaping and control garden. The RYW plant moves along the natural contours of living force and passes nutrients and warnings across all sectors of the garden. Of course, a gardener who works a bit by intuition can sense this but may find it awkward or difficult to articulate.

Of course, there is always the process of weeding and clearing that comes during the process of putting the garden to bed. In that regard, I would note that there are a number of invasive species that have



proliferated across the CYC garden, and in some cases nearly eradicated some of our more beautiful native plantings, such as the encounter plant, the social justice shrub, the irreverence flower, the entanglements of the vining unconscious, and the collectivity arbor, among others.

I would identify the primary genus and species that threatens our native CYC ecology, as the species of psychological concepts. These weeds are everywhere now and extremely difficult to uproot and prevent from over wintering. They include many variations and hybrids, but are centered around developmental crab grass, diagnosis briar, trauma vine, attachment root, the therapy/counseling parasite, biological deficit thorn, neurological disease rot, and the behavioral disorder fungus. These invasive species have already taken over large plots of the CYC garden, putting much of the true native beauty of our work at risk of extinction.

I hope that my highly abbreviated field guide and reflection on putting my fall garden to bed is moderately useful to new CYC gardeners. The old hands have been managing their gardens for years, and like me their patterns and plantings are well established. What I hope new gardeners will bring, in the spring that will follow the winter of my career, is an approach to the CYC garden that will affirm all that is life affirming, aesthetically founded in connectivity and multiplicity, and radically committed to enhancing the idiosyncratic entanglements that weaves us together through loving care.

Now back to putting my own garden to bed.

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Intercultural Competence for Youth Workers

Daniel Dixon and Onur Tahmaz

Abstract

Intercultural Competence for Youth workers (ICY)¹ was a project co-funded by the European Union Erasmus+ programme that ran for 14 months, from spring 2019 to spring 2020, and involved four organisations from Finland, Spain, Belgium, and the Netherlands.

Engaging youth workers² and young people with fewer opportunities, the project helped youth workers improve their intercultural ability to create places – particularly in the context of sports activities – where young people feel safe, accepted, and not discriminated against. In the context of the Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange (E+VE) initiative, the partners developed a ‘trial run’ which included an online facilitated dialogue session to test the pedagogy and process of VE, as well as get feedback from the youth involved.

Keywords

virtual exchange, youth work, intercultural awareness, sport, social inclusion

¹ <https://icyerasmus.squarespace.com/>

² ‘Youth worker’ is used as an umbrella term and comprises the various figures – trainers, instructors, and leaders – engaged in activities with youth.



Context

The ICY project's aim was to improve social inclusion in youth groups by training youth workers and coaches in intercultural competence.

The consortium of partners was made up of:

- HNMKY, (YMCA Helsinki) Finland³;
- Asociación Cultural Social y Educativa Segundas Oportunidades (Spain)⁴;
- ChangeMakerZ, the Netherlands⁵; and
- KSC City Pirates, Belgium⁶.

The professionals involved were football coaches, youth workers, trainers, facilitators, teachers, and educators. The objective was for them to share and learn from each other, exploring ways to improve intercultural competence within their organisations and beyond. The young people involved in the project were generally those with fewer opportunities, in other words from low socioeconomic and/or migrant backgrounds, unemployed, suffering from mental illness, or living in an outermost region of the EU. Most participants had found connection to their community and a safe space through sport and non-formal education, and due to the multicultural aspect of the communities involved, supporting young people and youth workers to gain effective intercultural competence skills was, and remains, a priority for the four organisations within the consortium.

³ <https://www.hnmky.fi/>

⁴ <https://www.acseso.org/>

⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/teamchangemakerz/>

⁶ <https://www.citypirates.be/>



In May 2018, the European Commission put forward proposals for the new EU Youth Strategy⁷. One of the main areas of further development was social inclusion. Due to the economic crisis, social exclusion among young people had increased. The ICY project used sports and physical education in youth work to increase inclusion and acceptance of diversity. The core goal of the project was to increase social inclusion and solidarity in the partner organisations' youth groups by training the youth workers in inclusive methods and intercultural competence. Realising the potential of using physical education in youth work as a method of increasing social inclusion and intercultural awareness was a key goal for the partner organisations. These goals are very much in line with the objectives mentioned in the Youth Strategy proposal for the years 2019-2027. However, although sports clubs, after school programmes, and other non-formal groups, especially those using physical education in their activities, are often considered as highly effective integrators and inclusive environments for youth, they are not free from racism and discrimination (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2010). If the youth workers, instructors, trainers, and leaders are not culturally competent leaders, sports and youth clubs can be places of exclusion and racism.

The ICY project helped youth workers improve their intercultural ability to create places where young people feel safe, accepted, and not discriminated against. The objective of ICY was to share best practices to increase social inclusion in youth groups. The project partners were youth organisations that use physical activities partly or fully. Increasing social inclusion and combatting discrimination are core values of each partner organisation, but all partners also had their own strengths. The organisations were chosen from culturally distinct areas and each provided

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth-strategy_en



different types of activities for youth. Throughout/during the project, the partner organisations and their instructors shared their experiences, learnt methods from each other, and exchanged best practices to facilitate social inclusion. These methods supported the youth workers in their daily work by helping them deal with racism and discrimination in their groups in a constructive way. As the youth workers' intercultural competence grew, they were more equipped to promote acceptance of diversity and cultural awareness in their groups.

The partner organisations aimed to enable inclusion by giving the youth workers the tools to develop their intercultural competence. To find the best tools (i.e. methods and activities), the partners exchanged their best practices in in-person short term training events (three job shadowing rounds and one intercultural competence training). In the intercultural competence training, the instructors learnt from one another both the theoretical basis of facilitating social inclusion and practical activity ideas that can be used to promote acceptance and inclusiveness. In job shadowing events, the partners observed the methods, habits, and actions of the instructors in the host organisations. It is important to get an outside observer to point out and learn from our tacit knowledge, to verbalise it, and to transfer these learnt methods into different contexts. ICY was a fantastic opportunity to focus on finding these activities and actions that improve the intercultural competence of instructors and increase social inclusion in the youth groups as well as to collect and test them in culturally different environments. Ultimately, it is not only the instructors but the young people in their groups who benefit from these culturally sensitive instruction methods. These methods were recorded and tested in different contexts, and are now available in tool kit format⁸.

⁸ <https://icyerasmus.squarespace.com/mission-index-impact>



During the project, the partners became aware of the E+VE initiative and with the support of UNICollaboration, developed a 'trial run' to test the pedagogy and process of VE, as well as get feedback from the youth involved. This 'project within a project' involved young people that had participated in the ICY activities.

The consortium saw the importance of keeping the momentum going between young people and youth workers that had been involved in the physical activities, and because the project was about intercultural competence, integrating E+VE seemed to meet its needs and goals. The idea was that eight young people taking part in the project would work on an asynchronous activity and also meet online for a dialogue session on the topic of intercultural competence. They would be supported in this activity by trained E+VE dialogue facilitators so they could engage on a deeper level about the topic.

Aims and description of the project

This was a 'trial run' for the consortium, and its main aim was to offer a way for the young people that were connected to ICY to continue learning from each other in their journey of developing intercultural competence. The work of the four organisations is mainly with physical activities, so this was also a great opportunity to test new ways of working with young people and of supporting intercultural competence development, and to see how virtual activities can complement in-person activities.

Two young people from each partner organisation (Finland, Spain, Netherlands, and Belgium), who had already met before in various transnational in-person activities, were chosen to take part. There was an asynchronous activity which involved a desk review of the ICY tool kit⁹ that

⁹ https://issuu.com/acsesogc/docs/icy_toolkit_english_1



was designed as an output of the project, and an online facilitated dialogue session. The eight young people met online with two Erasmus+ dialogue facilitators and took part in various activities which had been planned beforehand by the facilitators at UNICollaboration and the consortium.

Nuts and bolts

The young people had met throughout the project in various activities and training events and took part in activities together. They then met online in a group of eight to work with the dialogue facilitators, who elicited self-group awareness and understanding by providing a safe and effective learning environment where participants could begin to engage in effective cross-cultural dialogue online. The eight participants involved were all inspired to take the skills and understanding beyond their participation in this session and continue to engage in activities, two also planning to train to become dialogue facilitators themselves.

The young people were very motivated to do this online activity and to continue with the dialogue they had started during the physical mobilities. To prepare, they met with their youth workers to reflect on what they had learnt during the project's mobilities. The consortium met with the facilitation team at UNICollaboration and explained what the project entailed, the goals and outcomes, and the UNICollaboration team then designed a session plan based on intercultural dialogue and assumptions.

The session, which took place on the Zoom video-conferencing platform, started with a warm-up and an icebreaker activity. Participants were first of all engaged in an activity where the group analysed an image of 'The Culture Iceberg' and reflected on the visible and hidden aspects of culture.



In the second main activity, they reflected on aspects of their own identity. The purpose of the activity was to explore the multiple aspects of participants' identities and how different identities are foregrounded in relation to the groups and contexts they may find themselves in.

With the support of facilitators, participants reflected on feelings related to their identities and how they may feel when their identity is threatened, or when they are identified only in relation to one aspect of their identity. According to the feedback from the young people, it was a very powerful exercise. The session finished with a time for reflection on what they had learnt.

The dialogue session was led in English and the young people with a lower proficiency level were supported by their peers; the facilitators also kept a running 'chat box' in the Zoom platform of what was being discussed. This allowed the participants to use online translation tools such as Google Translate for anything they did not fully understand, or to prepare their response to a question. This worked very well and the participants reported how they were surprised with how much they were able to achieve in a second language. The facilitators encouraged the whole group to give themselves a round of applause at the end for all working in a language other than their own.

Evaluation, assessment, and recognition

The group leaders met the participants in their own youth/sports centres following the session and discussed it with the participants. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. They saw the value of connecting online and staying in contact with friends from other countries, in addition to meeting physically.



“It was great to see the people we met in Amsterdam again, and I thought talking online would be hard but it was actually really nice” – (VE participant, Spain).

“I wasn’t very nervous because I knew my friends already, but I was still a bit worried because my English is not good. It wasn’t difficult though, the session was relaxed and everyone told me I was good at speaking” – (VE participant, Belgium)

“I loved this project, and the VE was a great addition to it. I have since taken part in three more [Transnational Exchange Projects (TEPs)] and begin training to become a dialogue facilitator later this year. Recently, I wondered what we would do because of the pandemic, but I am amazed with how many great opportunities I have found online” – (VE participant, Spain).

Lessons learnt and future plans

The ICY project offered an opportunity to explore the potential of a blended model whereby following the last transnational training visit, some participants continued their engagement online. The results were extremely positive. Participants felt engaged, re-inspired, and more connected with their peers all around Europe. From the consortium’s standpoint, VE was simple to arrange: people used their mobile phones or laptops, and the whole process took only a few hours while providing meaningful interaction for participants. In our project, the exchange was



supported by UNICollaboration in the context of E+VE to cover the topics of cultural competence and impact of cultural identity in youth work.

There is great potential in VEs both as a supportive activity (before and after transnational exchanges) and as a stand-alone learning opportunity. For some individuals, travel is not always possible due to a variety of reasons (physical, financial, family), but this should not mean that they cannot take part in multinational virtual learning events.

As organisers, we saw this project as a 'trial run'. It was added as an activity to an existing project, and only included one facilitated dialogue session, but things have certainly moved on since then.

Based on our experience from this trial exchange, and the ICY consortium's involvement in E+VE activities, we have gone on to deliver more 'robust' TEPs. These include a selection of asynchronous resources and activities (readings, short videos, forum discussions) as well as collaborative tasks in which participants from different organisations work together to produce an outcome. In addition, we have included more online facilitated dialogue sessions as these allow the participants to find their feet and delve more deeply into the topics addressed as well as to get to know one another better. With the ICY consortium, the participants were already familiar with each other, but this is not always the case. Synchronous activities should be complemented with asynchronous activities to continue with engagement of the topic outside of the dialogue sessions, bringing more value and learning opportunities.

Since this project, we have also experienced many more challenges working with young people due to the global Covid-19 pandemic. Through this 'trial run' we became much more aware of how beneficial the possibilities of delivering and supporting youth work activities online could be.



Asociación Cultural Social y Educativa Segundas Oportunidades, one of the consortium members of the ICY project, designed, planned, and implemented two large TEPs during this period.

- **Fight fakes, think critically:** a four week TEP that included 53 young people from eight organisations in Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Croatia, Latvia, Slovenia, Serbia, and Hungary. Content was provided in the form of an e-book written for this project. Asynchronous activities required participants to engage with and reflect on the content which related to elections and referendums, the climate crisis, and vaccinations. Two facilitated dialogue sessions were organised: one at the beginning of the exchange for participants to get to know one another and their different contexts, and a second one to reflect on and discuss the content of the e-book. This project is part of a larger project application that will also include a youth worker training mobility, and a youth exchange mobility.
- **CSTEP – critical thinking:** a four week cross-sectoral TEP about critical thinking which included 13 organisations, one youth theatre group, two universities, one high school, one vocational school, and eight youth organisations. These organisations were from Spain, France, Croatia, Turkey, Greece, Hungary, Italy, and Portugal, and the project involved 89 young people. Asynchronous content was delivered each week using the TED-ED platform and this content formed the basis of weekly online facilitated dialogue sessions supported by E+VE facilitators.

The participants in these TEPs received E+VE badges as recognition of their participation, which reports the acquisition of the following skills:



- digital competence;
- intercultural competence;
- openness to cultural otherness and to other beliefs, world views, and practices; and
- cooperation skills.

Although the concept of open online badges is relatively new to the participants, they are encouraged to open LinkedIn accounts and start displaying their achievements there in preparation for joining the workforce. They also use EuroPass CVs and can display their new digital badges there along with their other experiences, qualifications, and achievements.

These projects have supported youth work activities, allowing them to continue and keep young people engaged and active during trying times. They have also highlighted different models and possibilities for youth work for consortium members, and the journey continues.

We also plan to utilise VE in blended mobility programmes as soon as mobility is possible again. Facilitated dialogue and asynchronous tasks will be used as a pre-departure activity before a youth exchange mobility begins to allow the participants to engage with each other before the physical mobility. This will allow them to break the ice and start delving into the theme of the project. During the mobility, we would continue with asynchronous activities, and begin the reflection process. A final online facilitated dialogue session would be included to enable participants to continue reflecting on lessons learnt, what went well, what did not, and what they have learnt about themselves and about others. As a consortium, we see the importance of there being more than one online



facilitated dialogue session, and the inclusion of asynchronous activities to complement the online facilitated dialogue sessions.

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From our Archives

First published in the October 2000 edition of *CYC-Online*

Children Reading: How Books Help

Jay Heale

In his introduction to *The Child and the Book*, Nicholas Tucker states:

Having originally studied both literature and psychology, I have always been aware of possible connections between the two.

For myself, I've never studied child psychology, though I have spent many years studying children. Through my experience as a teacher and as a self-styled children's book specialist, I am increasingly convinced that books are vital in children's lives. (And by "children" I mean anyone not fully equipped to face an adult life. There are, of course, books for adults as well!) So I offer some unskilled, unscientific observations on this relationship.

Books don't answer back

A book never says "I'm too busy just now" or "Shouldn't you be getting on with your homework?" or "you're not my friend anymore". In the same way that a child hugs a teddy-bear physically and pours confidences into its ear, so a child can hug a book (metaphorically) and share a chosen



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conversation. "Tell me that funny bit again", the child is saying, or "Let me stay a little longer". So, I see every reason for introducing children to books and stories which they can love "and ensuring that those books stay within reach. For a favourite book to have to go back to the library within a fortnight is putting a constant, cruel limit to a friendship.

Books offer happy endings

I became vividly aware of this when I found an intelligent Grade 7 boy reading a book – *and* when he could have been watching his first XI cricket team in action!

Later, I discovered that his family was going through a particularly ugly divorce. I firmly believe that he went back to reading his favourite book for reassurance. Call it "escape" if you like – books wisely offer hope in a world which can seem hopeless. You can relax inside a book. From the South African bookshelves, I would commend the easier tales of Jenny Seed, *The Always-Late Train*, *The Corner Cat*, etc., the light adventures published so economically by Daan Retief with such authors as John Stamps, Kay Esnouf and Alix Prettejohn, or animal stories such as *Chummy* and *Nqalu*, *The Mouse with no Whiskers*. Animals are always reassuring!

Books face problems with you

From Nicholas Tucker again:

Children sometimes need stimulation in their literature to help them move away from certain lazy, immature ways of thinking.

Life isn't always full of happy endings. Books help children to grow up by showing them some of life's problems perhaps before they have



encountered them. “Safe” inside the pages of a book, quarrels, jealousy, fear, insufficiency can be encountered and considered “and even prepared for.

Books can show children how other children live. Though I don’t hold in using books totally as therapeutic vehicles, I am highly aware of our lack of sheer knowledge (certainly within this country) of how other people live. While we are not allowed to visit freely the less privileged areas, then books such as *The Strollers* and *Sidwell’s Seeds* will help us understand, respectively, the homeless children in Cape Town and the rubbish dump dwellers of the Cape Flats. I’m not convinced that books about divorced homes help children whose parents are divorced, unless they are used like textbooks by child care workers. All divorces are different. Both parents *don’t* always love the children, as so many books cosily insist. But such books can and do help children to sympathise with *others* whose lives have disintegrated through divorce, adoption, death or just lack of love.

Our growing South African children’s book list already includes several books with themes useful for consideration, and those in other countries may wish to contribute ideas for a list. *Day of the Giants* shows children (and animals) uprooted by war; *Love, David* has petty crime on the Cape Flats induced by poverty; *Ben’s Buddy* makes a hero of a boy with a speech defect; *Crow Jack* looks at the problem of adjusting to a malformed limb (as well as an ex-alcoholic); *Hear the Rainbow Sing* explores the emotions of a musician gone deaf; *Some of us are Leopards, Some of us are Lions* is an easy reader looking at a black boy’s educational insufficiency.

All of these are good books in their own right. These social problems are included as part of strong storytelling and the understanding of character. It is the book which the child needs. What they get out of it will always be more than we expect.



Postcard from Leon Fulcher

From New Zealand in full lockdown fighting the Covid Delta Variant
September 2021

Kia Ora
Kotou
Katoa and

Warm Greetings
child and youth
care workers of the
world! I've been
watching
international news
bulletins and
following reports
about when and
how international

travel might resume in post-Covid-19 Pandemic times. For New Zealand, careful security of island borders is essential, and has included biosecurity for many years. Throughout the period of strict lockdown Level 4, there was very little movement in and around the cities. Some rural areas saw local residents putting up barricades to prevent people crossing Lockdown boundaries.

Daily briefings to the nation were provided throughout Level 4 Lockdown, with either the Prime Minister or Deputy Prime Minister fronting with the Director-General or his Deputy DG of Health. This kept



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numbers of new cases and contract tracing at the forefront of the nation's daily thinking, with vaccination rates also included along with encouragement to 'get the jab'.

Our major Covid Delta strain outbreak around New Zealand's largest city Auckland means it has faced significant restrictions in movement and daily lifestyles. All schools were closed, sporting activities cancelled, and only essential workers could move around with very restricted travel.

The art of contact tracing has ramped up significantly in New Zealand

The infographic is divided into two main sections. The left section, titled 'weeks until Monday, October 4. The rest of New Zealand* is at alert level 2.', lists rules for Alert level 3: Auckland (Stay at home, schools/daycare open for essential workers, restricted funerals, travel restrictions, closed public venues, mandatory face coverings, limited indoor/outdoor venues, social distancing) and Alert level 2: Rest of NZ (Covid test if symptomatic, mandatory face coverings, limited indoor/outdoor venues, social distancing). A map of New Zealand highlights Auckland in blue. The right section features a yellow and black diagonal striped background with the text 'Auckland is at Alert Level 3. The rest of NZ is at Alert Level 2.' and the slogan 'Unite against COVID-19' with the New Zealand Government logo.

Auckland in Lockdown Level 3 while the rest of New Zealand moves to Level 2

A photograph of a street scene in Auckland during lockdown. A digital sign on the left side of the road displays the text 'BE KIND STAY CALM COVID19.GOV.T.NZ'. The street is mostly empty, with a few cars visible in the distance. In the background, there are residential houses on a hillside under a clear sky.

Lockdown 4 restrictions with only essential workers permitted to continue working



since this Pandemic began. Gnostic sequencing has also health practitioners, until now, to keep pace with Covid movements here. With South Auckland outbreaks having occurred within its Pacific Island communities, efforts have been made to work through Pacifica elders, ministers, and youth leaders to ramp up the vaccination campaign within this largest population of Polynesian peoples in the Pacific.

The positive responses across Auckland have enabled our largest city to move from complete Lockdown Level 4 now to Level 3. Schools are still closed, and people are still encouraged to work from home. People do have enhanced freedom for recreation and leisure activities, still with safe distancing, or gather for funerals or church gatherings of no more than 100.

A challenge facing many in Auckland's Pacific Island community, especially young people, has been the mostly American 'anti-vax' messages picked up via social media. Youth leaders, doctors and



Covid Testing ramped up, especially in South Auckland



Large outbreak in Auckland's Pacific Island community led to targeted vaccinations



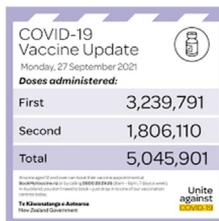
nurses from their own communities proved essential in rebalancing fact from fiction.

Mobile vaccination has now been added to the repertoire of options offered to local communities having less access to personal transport to other vaccination centres. The 'Shot Bro!' buses have been repurposed from former roles as Auckland Airport Transport buses. With far fewer international air travellers, so it is that the new 'Shot Bro!' buses have emerged!

The purchase of additional Pfizer vaccine from Spain and from Denmark has made it possible for New Zealand to push forward vigorously with its vaccination strategy, also supporting the Cook Islands strategy. While elimination remains a national priority, Plan B involves achieving high vaccination rates throughout the country. Our numbers are improving.



New mobile vaccination 'Shot Bro Buses' targeting Māori & Pacifica communities



Vaccination rates amongst younger New Zealanders have shown good take-up



It was a very big deal as Auckland moved out of Level 4 Lockdown this time. Kentucky Fried Chicken, Burger King, McDonald's, and take-away coffee outlets recouped much of their lockdown financial draught, all in 24



hours! Long lines of vehicles stretched for blocks. We have continued to enjoy our virtual involvement with the Blacks playing rugby football in Queensland, Australia, now with the Rugby Championship over Australia, Argentina, & South Africa. We wait to see if New Zealand can go unbeaten in 2021! Kia Kaha! Stand Tall! And stay safe folks!



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