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**PALYCW Annual Conference 2023:**

**Formally Informal: Pedagogy, Community & Practice**

**Kedleston Road Campus, University of Derby**

**Seminars**

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| A ‘Community of Practice’ within HE: a case study of a Professional Practitioners Network (PPN). | This shared discussion piece will highlight the influence of ‘informal education’ as posed by Freire, that it ‘is a dialogical (or conversational) rather than a curricula form’ and such ‘dialogue involves respect’ (Smith; 1997, 2002). This informality informs the purpose to cultivate communities, associations and relationships that make for human flourishing (Jeffs and Smith; 1997, 2005, 2011). Thus, leading to a ‘community of practice’ where ‘learning is formed from a combination of community, identity, meaning and practice’ (Ord, 2016, p. 220). A case study example of the PPN developed by the Course Team will be shared in reflecting upon the challenges and opportunities it presents. It additionally considers the question of ‘Youth Course Survival’ whereby the ‘informal’ co-existence with the ‘formal’ in enabling growth, development, and sustainability – is it an option or necessity? | NTU TeamIan.jones@ntu.ac.uk |
| Photovoice, Cellfilm and Digital Storytelling as Pedagogical Tools for Community Practice | This workshop-based session explores the use of photovoice, сellfilm, and digital storytelling as innovative pedagogical tools to enhance community practice in the context of education for community and youth workers. These techniques can promote collaboration, self-expression, and critical thinking, while encouraging a more inclusive and participatory educational environment.The three approaches overlap at various points. Photоvoiсe is a powerful tool for empowerment and social change, enabling participants to document their experiences and perspectives through photography. We will share the principles and methodology of photovoice, alongside case studies illustrating its effectiveness in community and youth work settings. Cellfilm leverages mobile technology to create impactful stories and foster social action. We will explore the emergence of сellfilm in critical pedagogy and provide examples of projects. Digital storytelling employs multimedia narratives to facilitate self-expression and reflection. We will provide an overview of digital storytelling as a pedagogical tool, examine its impact on personal and community development, and present guidelines for designing and implementing digital storytelling projects. The session will also address the importance of participatory evaluation and feedback in assessing the impact of these multimedia approaches on community practice. Participants will be able to interact with materials and evaluate their problem-posing potential. | Dr John Lockhartjlockhart@uclan.ac.uk  |
| Professional Placements: Keeping it quality | In all cases of gaining a youth work qualification (Level 2 – Level 7), there is some expectation of completing placement hours to work towards gaining professional youth work status. The NYA state: “Gaining a qualification that is either endorsed or validated by the National Youth Agency and recognised by the JNC ensures it is quality checked and fit for purpose.” We (the training providers) often experience this as finding a multitude of placement opportunities and ensuring there is an assessment piece which reflects on the skills needed to succeed in youth.In the first year of running the BA (Hons) Youth Work and Communities programme at BCU, placement organisation and assessment of practice was one of our biggest obstacles. How is it all done? During this session, we would hope to reflect on the process we have started at BCU to secure placement opportunities, quality check them and align assessments to standards. We hope to bring to light the highs, the lows and what we are still learning about ‘getting this right’. We would also hope to understand how others manage this space through discussion with co-professionals and how on-going engagement with placement providers is managed within the sector. | Chloe Dennis-GreenChloe.dennis-green@bcu.ac.uk  |
| Pedagogical processes matter: how different approaches influence outcome reports. | In this presentation, I draw upon forty-five semi-structured interviews with practitioners and community residents involved in asset-based and rights-based approaches to discuss how different pedagogical approaches influence how people perceive and report outcomes. I argue that assets-based approaches promote positive thinking. They emphasize ‘the good’ in communities, encouraging people to focus on what they have, instead of their problems (García, 2020, pp. 69–70). As a result, those involved in these approaches tend to be more likely to assess the impact of community and youth work projects positively, regardless of the observable improvements they have experienced. Rights-based approaches, by contrast, promote critical thinking. They encourage communities to analyse how power operates and become more aware of the impact that social, political, economic and cultural contexts have upon their lives.(Freire, 2000; Hooks, 2014; Jemal, 2017). As a result, those involved in rights-based approaches tend to be more likely to assess the impact of community and youth work projects negatively, regardless of the observable improvements they have experienced. Understanding how different approaches influence people’s assessments is crucial to establish the impact of community development and youth work. This presentation calls practitioners and academics for a better understanding of how people make sense of the impact of community and youth work depending on the mindset different pedagogical approaches encourage people to adopt. | Cristina Asenjo Palmac.asenjopalma@wlv.ac.uk  |
| YMCA George Williams College – Relational Practice | In April 2023 the YMCA George Williams College launched its new strategy and three centres of practice. Our education and training team have developed a new curriculum and pedagogical approach to be delivered through these centres. This conference presentation will provide an overview of our new organisational strategy and will then focus on the pedagogical approach of the new YMCA George Williams College: Relational Practice which is predicated on three principles, these are dialogue, reflective practice, and authenticity. In and of themselves, none of these ideas are original, but as a sum of parts they provide a co-constructed pedagogy which enable human growth and development that we consider essential to all work with young people. Our presentation will provide a theoretical overview of the origins of relational practice and how they have informed our new curriculum (Buber,1923, Noddings, 2013, Dewey, 1938 and Rogers, 1951) as well as providing insight into how we translate that into ‘practices’ (Bourdieu, 1972, Kemmis, 2021). Our presentation will then provide insight into how we situate relational practice in three respects; as curriculum content, as an applied pedagogical approach, and as our organisational culture, which supports work with young people across a range of practices. | Simon Frost and Prof Kaz StuartSimon.frost@ymcageorgewilliams.uk and kaz.stuart@ymcageorgewilliams.uk  |
| An Investigation of Young People’s Perspectives on the effectiveness of Scottish Youth Work in Supporting Well-being in the Wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic | This research investigates how young people’s well-being priorities and how different forms of youth work participation in Scotland impact their ability to take action to address those priorities, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This study utilises the methods of photovoice, photo-elicitation, semi-structured interviews, and an open-ended questionnaire. The co-creation of knowledge through photovoice and photo-elicitation helps to diminish power relationships by meaningfully engaging participants with academia and relevant stakeholders within their local community. This study actively opposes tokenistic engagement by encouraging participants to be curious about their experiences while learning to lobby for change. Youth work services articulate that they have been significant in supporting young people throughout COVID-19 and its aftermath (UK Youth, 2021; Youth Scotland, 2020; YouthLink Scotland, 2020), but young people’s views are missing. This research addresses a gap in the literature by investigating the experiences of those young people whom COVID-19 has most detrimentally impacted. This paper will present examples of the participants’ photographic data and their accompanying photo stories. Additionally, it will discuss data concerning the participant-led coding and reflexive thematic analysis process. Lastly, it will present any preliminary findings and conclude with the expected outcomes of the study. | Haley Sneedh.sneed.1@research.gla.ac.uk  |
| The Wonder of Learning beyond the Walls | Since 2007, there has been an exponential increase in research publications considering ‘nature connectedness’ alongside a societal move to consider and integrate sustainability, conservation and climate awareness (European Environment Agency, 2023). This links with institutional integration of ‘green’ strategies around nature as an opportunity for addressing the social, emotional and physical challenges faced by our society and culture (Baste and Watson, 2021). Froebel (Tovey, 2017) explored engaging with the outdoors as an opportunity for learning, but these spaces have often been assigned to Early Years learning and benefits simplified to childlike pedagogy. If our belief in learning is beyond an age stratified basis to human potential and experience, then the development of discovery as a valid educational tool may also expand beyond the playground. The engagement of the outdoor spaces offers opportunity to explore ‘wonder’ (Schinkel, 2018) in learning that moves from predictability and performance led teaching to creative spaces of invitational and shared knowledge. This session will explore how engaging beyond the classroom walls offers students an opportunity to develop wonder-based learning experiences creating practices that support wellbeing (Capaldi et al, 2017), belonging (Hartig et al, 2014) and sustainability (Lankenau, 2018). Together we can consider how connecting to natural places around us offers opportunity to adventure into wonder and wondering, developing instrinically motived learning and fresh spaces for knowledge. | Lucie Hutson l.hutson@derby.ac.uk |
| Youth Work – improving lives for young people and communities | Introducing the book – (Youth work: improving lives for young people and communities). Bristol Uni. Press. Open access youth work opportunities in urban communities deep in regeneration and change – re-creating social capital and community cohesion. Understanding and advocating for the benefits of open access youth work in the current climate. | Dr Tracie Trimmer-Platman t.trimmer-platman@uel.ac.uk  |
| Negotiating the use of content warning in the professional education curriculum | “I’d felt like my voice was being ignored or misinterpreted for so long “ Conceptualising  the ethics of ‘voice’ in policy, research and practice. This paper emerges out of a larger ongoing pilot study in how professional education might become more responsive to the needs and experiences of care experienced young people. This research considers the experiences of young people and how they narrate (or sometimes refused to narrate) their experiences of professionals that have made a difference in their lives and how this might inform future professional education. Through this paper I want to reflect on the ethical and conceptual   complexities of ‘voice’ and some of the early lesson learnt from this pilot regarding the need to think more broadly about the politics and possibilities of research participation and dissemination. I am particularly interested here in how youth ‘voice’ is conceptualised and objectified in research and practice discourse and the connecting issues of power and practice in analysis, dissemination and professional education.   Attendees will be asked to share their apparent near-triumphs and near-failures in re/framing and re/thinking ‘voice’ in tricky research, policy and practice terrain.  | Fin CullenFiona.Cullen@stmarys.ac.uk  |
| Does an Interpretivist Approach to Research Inadvertently Support a Neoliberal Agenda? | The person-centred nature of youth work lends itself to an interpretivist approach to research. The authentic voice of young people is captured and conclusions drawn. However, false consciousness can lead, in some cases, to participants giving voice to the internalised oppressions of bourgeois.hegemony. Furthermore, the analysed data could result in research perceptions of a reality that does not reflect the actual reality experienced by the participants. The contention here is that research which focuses on agency or on feelings and emotions to the exclusion of structural influences and the invisible, unseen or absent mechanisms that cause behaviours, perceptions and actions or events is to examine or reveal only partial reality. Reality is more than those elements of it which are socially constructed. A more full study of the phenomena or subject matter of the research would be conducted if a theoretical approach such as Critical Realism were utilised, wherein both agency and structure are of significant importance. Reducing research to an analysis of the perceptions of participants without consideration of the causal origins of such perceptions is not only superficial but is to take the neoliberal concept of agency as a given. Consequently, it is suggestive of accepting the victims of oppression as being responsible for their own predicament. | Christopher Herriotcherriot@dmu.ac.uk  |
| “I’d felt like my voice was being ignored or misinterpreted for so long “ Conceptualising the ethics of ‘voice’ in policy, research and practice | Negotiating the use of content warnings in the professional education curriculum Fin Cullen & Michael Whelan Trigger and content warnings remain a highly contested area of contemporary academic practice (Halberstam, 2017). Key debates have focused on issues of trauma, discomfort and academic freedom in the emotionally ‘safe’ classroom. Many scholars have noted the various (im)possibilities in negotiating the purpose, range and use of trigger warnings and how emotional harms can be conflated with negotiating thorny issues of emotional discomfort (Carter, 2015; Bentley, 2017). These issues are especially pertinent and challenging for professional education. Indeed, readying students for practice means engaging in a host of areas that may in themselves be both triggering and (re)traumatising, yet are fundamentally parts of everyday practice within education and the helping professions (Robbins, 2016) This discussion-based workshop takes the form of a research focus group and aims to contribute to developing both insights into contemporary professional education practice within HE settings but also to consider how professional educators navigate the need for ‘discomfort’ when exploring the complex and shifting dynamics of practice. The workshop discussion will be audio recorded with consent and all participants briefed before participating in the research. Please email Fin Cullen (Fiona.cullen@stmarys.ac.uk) if you would like further information or to discuss the research in further detail) | Fin Cullen fiona.cullen@stmarys.ac.uk  |
| Routes to the profession | Fringe Session | Mike Sealnational.officer@tagpalycw.org |
| The Co-operative University | Fringe Session | Dr John Lockhart jlockhart@uclan.ac.uk  |
| 'Friends, Frenemies, or foes? The big 3 (NYA/UK Youth & IYW) and their relationship with HEI's.' | Fringe Session | Paulette Sawyers P.Sawyers@staff.newman.ac.uk  |
| ‘Missed-out, Misrepresented & Misunderstood’: Student Perspectives of Youth Work Practice. | This shared discussion piece will highlight 3 students research interests upon how their respective topics inform current and future practice. Firstly, the question ‘Has the role of Girls in Gangs been overlooked?’ is explored. It discusses the gendered focused research upon gangs and gang culture, highlighting the limited (or lack of) evidence in relation to girls. UK research, after the long-standing rejection of the ‘gang paradigm’, has mostly been concerned with young men which has resulted in the study of female gang membership being highly neglected (Batchelor, 2011; Campbell, 1984, 1990; Hunt & Joe-Laidler, 2001; Moore & Hagedorn, 2001).Secondly, ‘Beauty Representation impacting the Mental Health of Black Youths in relation to Hair’ is considered. The lack of awareness about the significance of black hair, thus having negative connotations can impact the way youths perceive themselves and how they think society views them. Finally, with emerging sector practice developments, ‘Trauma-Informed Leadership & Management’ is discussed in relation to youth work practice. With youth work now immersed in spaces that engage with issues perceived as ‘non-mainstream’, how do youth workers manage such intensive environments? Do the ‘care-givers’ become the traumatised? It also considers the role of the youth organisation. Understanding the impact of trauma is essential for building an organisation that prioritises the well-being of its members (Sweeney et al., 2018). | NTU Students |
| Beyond the call of duty | ‘Young in Covid’ transpired over a period of 3 years against the backdrop of covid where young people felt invisible, unheard and blamed. The project was aimed at capturing the voices of young people (through the medium of film) who wanted to authentically talk about the very personal challenges they were experiencing whereby they felt marginalised and excluded in conversation that were happening in the city. As a frontline worker, I felt this should not be the case in a city that has the largest and one of the most diverse youth populations in the UK. This presentation will explore the trials, tribulations and personal risks involved in undertaking projects which bring to the fore difficult and painful stories immersed in inequality, social deprivation and economic disadvantage. The presentation will also touch upon practice around generating trust and capacity building amongst young people for them to be able to confidently tell their stories. I will further explore ‘buy in’ from stakeholders in the City and approaches such as using media as a tool to encourage ownership and accountability of issues raised. Film Links: Young in Covid: The Silent Pandemic: Young in Covid - The Silent Pandemic (A Film by Khidmat Centres) – YouTube | Dr Sophie Buncy Sofia.buncy@khidmat.org.uk  |
| “They expect us to work together, so why don’t they train us together”. A student perspective on the need for interdisciplinary learning in Social Care education and JNC Youth & Community Work training. | “They expect us to work together, so why don’t they train us together”. At the start of the 21st Century, many of the social policy frameworks in which we operate as JNC qualified youth workers have been driven by what we might call 'knee-jerk' reactions to calamitous and tragic individual events, such as the Victoria Climbie case in 2000, Baby P in 2007, and other social problems such as the 2011 riots across the UK. More recently, sexual exploitation reviews in Rotherham (Wanless & Whittam, 2018) and Oldham (Newsam & Ridgway, 2022) have questioned the effectiveness of agencies in working together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. Much of the rhetoric and vision of subsequent policies such as Every Child Matters (2003) and (in Wales) Shared Purpose - Shared Delivery (2014) often urges more collaboration, integration and coming together of professional services to develop 'interprofessional' strategies to tackle these problems in society. This paper questions to what degree these policy shifts should influence the way in which we as students are prepared for the current trend towards integrated practice and interprofessional partnership working? To what extent is the informal identity of professions such as youth work and social care diluted within formal interprofessional frameworks of local authorities? | Mick Conroy Mick.Conroy@southwales.ac.uk  |
| Know Your NOS!National Occupational Standards in Community Development, Youth Work and Adult Learning | Further to the 2023 review of Community Development and Family Learning NOS, the 2023 creation of a suite of NOS for Adult Learning, and the upcoming requirement for the Youth Work NOS to be reviewed (likely 2024), this discussion will allow us to: • Consider sector requirements for the use of current NOS • Reflect on – How you use NOS in your workplace – How else you could use NOS • Identify future sector needs, support requirements and actions. | Kirsty Gemmell Kirsty.gemmell@cldstandardscouncil.org.uk  |
| Queering Pedagogy: beyond inclusion | The workshop aims to explore and revise embedded societal norms which are reproduced throughout our practice. Through a presentation of my research and findings, workshop style activities and discussions/exchanges of knowledge, Queer will be utilised not only to disrupt, but to divest from cis-normative and hetero-normative standards that are often cemented by the fields within which we work. The workshop aims to celebrate Queer, and use Queer to celebrate all which deviates from normalcy. Informed by collected narratives, ethnohistory and theoretical developments in pedagogy, the presentation will explore the multifaceted and multidisciplinary application of Queer Pedagogy. Concerned with crossing creative, cultural and disciplinary boundaries yet.focused on those practising within youth and community landscapes in the UK, the research put forward aims to empower others to agitate systems of oppression by unusualising the norms, and informalising the formal. With the intention of empowering youth, community and educational pedagogues to feel confident in Queering their pedagogy, the audience will be invited to mobilise Queer in order to re-examine and reconstruct teaching and practice, and discover new and Queered ways of upholding anti-oppressive approaches to inclusion. The workshop will be participatory and participants will be encouraged to deduce and produce their own knowledge and actions as an outcome. | Hannah Poklad hannahpoklad@outlook.com  |