Working in Youth Service Organizations: The Sphere of Professional Education

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Prologue

My interest in looking at the professional education for those working in youth-service organizations emerges within the tension of these two views:

My first memory as a community (youth) worker was so chaotic and terrifying. I was a 17-year-old kid, “counselor,” with a group of kids and told, “Just get them to do arts.” . . . There was no training, no supervision; there was no place to talk about the problems. I begged two hospitals to let me go visit the dying people in the hospital instead. . . this was 1973. (practitioner, personal communication)

Realizing that my effectiveness is based upon my openness to learn from personal experience, I suspect that the training I received took me in the opposite direction. Presenting the false confidence of theories and the shallow competence of controlling practices, it was easy for me to hide from myself and from the world. In that place, I deny myself the pleasures and pains of learning and take on the ‘anesthesia of the expert.’ (Fewster, 1990, p. 133)

In 1973, apprenticeship into the craft of youth work was trial-by-fire. Though still with some miles to travel, today we are a long way away from a trial-by-fire approach. Today, we understand the necessity of orientation, supervision, and ongoing professional development for supporting quality practice and healthy practitioners. But, what is the balance between helping new practitioners begin the job with the skills and the confidence to engage young people in positive, developmental experiences and the over-training that can lead to hiding behind notions of expertise? Here I look at youthwork education in the United States in order to ponder whether by design we are supporting the development of practitioners who while trained in an understanding of youth, know that the understanding they hold should at all times remain open to scrutiny.
Introduction

The foundation for youthwork education in the United States was laid more than three decades ago. In 1975, Gisela Konopka from the University of Minnesota initiated the first organized movement in the field to support youthwork education. With funding from the Lilly Endowment, professor Konopka began the National Youthworker Education Project. Youth workers from national girl-serving organizations such as, the American National Red Cross, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Camp Fire Girls, 4-H, Girls Clubs of America, Girl Scouts, YWCA and the United Neighborhood Centers of America participated. The goal was to improve the quality of voluntary youth-serving organizations, and in particular to make programs more relevant for adolescent girls.

More than twenty years later, a growing understanding of the importance of investing in the workforce was afoot. In the early 1990’s, the Wallace Foundation invested $55 million over a ten-year period for workforce development in national organizations, such as the Boy Scouts of America, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, National 4-H Council, Girls Incorporated, and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. Evaluations of such efforts showed that youth workers were often highly satisfied with the training; however, evaluators pointed out that the impact of training on practice and on youth outcomes was harder to ascertain (AED, 2002). The past decade has paid greater attention to the relationship between staff training and program outcomes (Dennehy, Gannett, & Robbins, 2006). For instance, preliminary findings from the New York School Age Care Credential evaluation suggest that training programs have a positive impact on program quality in school-age settings (McCabe & Cochran, 2006).

This earlier work provides a strong foundation for where we are today as a field (Quinn, 2012).

However, in the current fiscal climate, foundations are showing little interest in funding professional development initiatives for youth workers. Further, shrinking programmatic budgets leave little room for organizations to put aside dollars for training. If we are to advocate that professional development is a necessary condition of quality youth work practice, then we will not only need cogent arguments why training is more than “just nice” but we will need collaborative models of shared resources. Using the language put forth by the Next Gen Youth Work Coalition, I look at the spectrum of professional education aimed at creating a “stable, prepared, supported, and committed” workforce and include a full complement of professional development activities from non-credit trainings to credit-bearing degrees. Henceforth, I refer to this full sphere as Youthwork Education or YoED.

The project took place in two phases. In Phase I, I create a typology of YoED that was parsimonious including the minimum of five elements: Landscape, Knowledge, Design, Duration and Intensity. The typology is not meant to judge but to map YoEd according to these elements. Phase II examines specific YoEd cases that lie across the typology and explores the conditions that support professional development from several theoretical perspectives. In a manner of speaking, Phase I yields the geography of youthwork education; it is a one-dimensional, flat and landscape view. Phase II yields the sphere of youthwork education; it is three-dimensional offering examination spatially, culturally and anthropologically.
PHASE I: THE GEOGRAPHY OF YOUTHWORK EDUCATION.

1. What is the landscape of YoED in the United States? [who’s doing what where?]
2. What is the knowledge base of YoED? [what is important to learn?]
3. What is the instructional design of YoED? [how is it being done?]

PHASE II: THE SPHERE OF YOUTHWORK EDUCATION.

1. What conditions are needed for youth workers to develop their professional capacity with and on behalf of young people?
2. How do the current approaches to YoED emerge from and inform our understanding(s) of youth/work/education?

Methodology

The first task was to choose a site where a full complement of YoED could be located and studied. Minnesota was an outstanding choice not only because of its long history with youthwork education but because it continues to serve as a ‘best case’ scenario with support for young people at all levels, public and private. In fact, Minneapolis is one of the few urban cities that include young people in policy decisions through its Youth Congress. There is a natural pipeline of youth to youthwork leaders. In addition, Minnesota, and in particular the University of Minnesota, is a hub for providing a vast array of youthwork education from non-credit trainings to degree programs. I also observed several Youth Studies courses at the undergraduate and graduate level and visited youth programs to talk with staff about their experiences with professional development. Finally, curriculum, course-related materials, and student products were collected and analyzed in relation to the research questions. Appendix A provides a complete list of the data sources. All data and interpretations used in the report were sent back to participants for cross check.

While Minnesota remained the main site for this research, other University sites were included for comparative purposes; namely the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Extension, Cornell University Extension, and the University of Pittsburgh’s Applied Developmental Psychology program. These universities are comparable in that they have strong scholarship in youth work and a history offering the Advancing Youth Development training, a widely known curriculum developed by the National Training Institute for Community Youth Work under their BEST (Building Exemplary Systems for Training Youth Workers) initiative. Also visited was the BEST Youth Worker Intensive Training offered by Health Resources in Action in Boston. Where applicable, key players were interviewed.

All interviews were ethnographic and followed an open, unstructured format to maximize dialogue (Quinn Patton, 2002).

Finally, other institutions of higher education with youth-related degree programs were contacted for information regarding their programs. Preliminary findings are presented here; a full report will be made available at http://www.york.cuny.edu/~fusco by December 2012, in collaboration with the Higher Education committee of the Next Gen Youth Work Coalition {find us at http://www.facebook.com/NextGenYouthWorkCoalition}. 
The Geography of Youthwork Education: Phase I Findings

#1. What is the landscape of YoED in the United States?

In conducting a scan, it became clear quickly that Youthwork Education is abundant in the United States. There are three types of institutions designing and implementing formal YoED: Youth organizations, intermediary agencies (profit and nonprofit), and institutions of higher education (IHE). It also occurs informally through peer networks, direct (on-the-job) experience, reflection and inquiry. These informal learning methods are driven by practitioners either individually or as a group and offer a self-paced, individualized way of learning. This plethora of support has been categorized elsewhere; for instance, VanderVen (1993) includes seven categories of training: Academic, Collaborative, Specialized, Service, Professional/Community, Independent, and Interactive. In many instances, youth workers do not develop professionally through only one of these options but travel through a nexus of YoED throughout their career (see Figure 1). A typical youth worker might begin an organization with a brief orientation, attend an annual organizational training, join a peer mentoring collaborative, take an online seminar, and enroll in a degree program related to youth studies. Any attempt at understanding the impact of YoED on staff practice must then consider youth workers’ history with professional development. For instance, a youth worker who takes an online seminar after receiving a degree in Youth Studies is likely to interact with the content and learning process differently than a youth worker who is new to the field and has only attended an orientation run by their organization.

Figure 1. Nexus of Youthwork Education

Youth organizations and intermediaries.

Large organizations such as 4-H, the Boys and Girls Clubs of America and the YMCA are among the largest providers of YoED serving the greatest number of youth workers on a regular basis. The Y alone is in 10,000 communities across the country and hires 20,000 full-time staff as well as 500,000 volunteers. 4-H also relies on a strong cadre of volunteers, 540,000 of them, with 3,500 full-time staff (see http://www.4-h.org/about/youth-development-organization). These agencies, because of their size and resource allocations, manage their own professional development, at times relying on external intermediaries for specialized topics. Smaller community-based organizations also manage some of their training in-house but rely on intermediary agencies to get them beyond orientation. There are also a growing number of national intermediaries that offer online training and resources for youth workers:

- Association for Child & Youth Care Practice
- BOOST
- David P. Weikart Center for Program Quality
- Foundations, Inc.
- National Afterschool Association
- National Collaboration for Youth
- National Association of Extension 4-H Agents
• National Institute on Out-of-School Time
• National Resource Center for Youth Development
• School’s Out Washington
• SEDL National Center for Quality Afterschool
• The Out-of-School Time Resource Center

Institutions of higher education (IHE) can play the role of an intermediary through affiliate structures. The most common example is the Cooperative Extension Centers within land-grand universities. Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture, the Cooperative Extension System has included boys’ and girls’ clubs since inception in 1914 and 4-H staff training is among the largest in the country. While Extension Centers offer training, often these are not tied to college credit (though this is changing with a growing number of Extension Centers working through their affiliate University to establish a credit structure).

Intermediary agencies, which can include nonprofit agencies as well as for profit companies, have the advantage of bringing staff from different organizations together to learn. However, because of the diverse audiences they serve, intermediaries are less able to focus training on specific organizational values. Orientation and training on the organization’s values and practices help socialize one to the micro setting of work promoting one’s identity as an employer of the organization. Belonging to a profession however requires connecting and networking with others outside of one’s organization. Annual conferences help youth workers connect to each other creating social capital and a professional identity. Some of the national conferences attended by youth workers in the United States include:

• American Camp Association National Conference
• BOOST
• Foundations, Inc.
• International Child & Youth Care Conference
• National Afterschool Association
• National Association of Extension 4-H Agents
• National Service Learning Conference
• National Youth At-Risk Conference

In addition, some intermediaries offer local and regional conferences throughout the year. For instance,

• Partnership for After School Education, New York
• The After School Institute, Baltimore
• Health Resources in Action/BEST Initiative, Boston
• Ohio Association of Child Care Agencies
• Canadian Associations in CYC
• Young Nonprofit Professional Network, Chicago

Higher education and YoED.

Colleges and universities are playing a growing role in the education of youth workers. They are critical partners in supporting practitioners to develop a deep interdisciplinary base of knowledge from which to frame their work. Beyond the role of teaching, faculty in higher education can help document and research quality practice alongside master practitioners, deepening the field’s knowledge base through scholarship. Because of the importance of establishing a discipline base for youth studies that is recognized as a viable topic of study (Fusco, 2012b) and due to the rise of offerings in higher education of such programs, it was critical to get a sense of the broader landscape of YoED within higher education. Programs were located through a web search and included those that were credit bearing (degree and non-degree), at either the undergraduate or graduate level, and offered within an academic department. The programs selected had to include “youth” in the program title and/or in the description of the program. Programs geared solely

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2 “Youth workers” in the United States can work in a variety of settings including afterschool programs, camps, residential group homes, reservations, street corners, schools, parks, and community centers. The defining factors are that the work is contextual, responsive, and participatory (Fusco, 2012c).
to the study of “children” and “adolescents” were excluded. The decision to exclude such programs was largely one of orientation. Child and adolescent development and/or psychology have longer history(ies) in higher education and there are more programs designed around this content; however, such programs are more likely to be geared towards psychological understandings of individuals, rather than youth development (a collective and ecological focus). Further, contrary to the typical chronological distinctions between childhood and adolescence, “youth” belongs to a role occupied by a societal, not a biological, need. This is evident in the varying age ranges defined by different systems: the United Nations defines youth as ages 15 to 24 to correspond to economic self-sufficiency; the legal system defines youth or ‘youthful offender’ as anyone under the age of 18 such that anyone over the age of 18 can be tried as an adult; in New Zealand it is 12 to 24; and in some African countries youth policies might include those up to age 35, likely to accommodate for apartheid practices that were in effect into the 1990’s. In the practice context of youth work, we are most comfortable including those as young as ten (and this is shifting downwards to age eight) through age 21 (and this is shifting upwards to age 25).

The mapping of programs was done to determine the number of Youth Studies programs across the country, where they were geographically located, the breakdown by level and degree type, and the disciplinary home (theoretical frame) of these programs. In total, 60 youthwork education programs have been located so far. This itself is a surprising finding given that only four years ago it was reported that six major universities offered one or more levels of youth worker training (AED, 2008) – a 900% increase in a four year period. Twenty-six of the 50 States have at least one institution of higher education that offers a program in a youth-related area of study (see Figure 2). This includes afterschool education, community-based learning, family studies, sociology of youth, youth development, youth ministry, youth studies, youth work, and the like. While throughout the world, Youth Studies, is common vernacular, here it is not. The range of program names is vast and illustrates the disjointed nature of the academic discipline here in the States (see also, Fusco, 2012b for a discussion). At the undergraduate level, there were two associate degree programs, 14 majors leading to a baccalaureate degree, seven minors, and ten certificate programs (see Table 1 for the program titles). There is one BS/MSW dual program. At the graduate level, there were 21 master’s programs, five graduate certificates and eight doctoral programs. The doctoral programs are more ambiguous in terms of their focus on “youth” but all describe youth in the context of family, policy, youth organizations, health and/or education; there were no doctoral programs specific to youth studies. There are also three universities that offer one course in youth studies/youth development (Arizona State, Harvard, Tufts University).

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3 At the time of this writing, another institution in the 27th state was in the process of developing a degree program at the undergraduate level.
Figure 2. Map of YoED in the United States
### TABLE 1. YOUTHWORK EDUCATION PROGRAMS WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION

#### UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS (leading to bachelor degree unless otherwise noted)

- Applied Developmental Psychology
- Child & Family Studies
- Children, Family, & Community
- Child & Youth Studies
- Human Services with High-Risk Youth Studies concentration
- Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences with Youth Development concentration
- Sociology with Youth Studies concentration
- Youth Development Practitioner, Associates degree
- Youth Development Studies
- Youth Ministries
- Youth & Society
- Youth Studies (2)

#### UNDERGRADUATE MINORS

- Adolescent & Youth Development
- Child & Youth Studies
- Youth Services
- Youth Studies (2)

#### UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATES

- Certificate in Afterschool Education
- Certificate in Professional Youth Work
- Certificate Program for Child & Youth Workers
- Indiana Youth Development Credential
- Nonprofit Leadership Alliance (formerly American Humanics)
- School-Age and Youth Development
- Youth & Community Development Scholars
- Youth Development Worker Certificate
- Youth Work Certificate (2)

#### MASTERS PROGRAMS

- Agricultural Education and 4-H Youth Development, MS
- Applied Youth, Family, and Community Education, M.Ed.
- Child, Youth & Family Services Management, MBS or MPP
- Child, Youth & Family Studies, MS
- Curriculum & Instruction, M.Ed.
- Family, Life and Youth, MS
- Family, Youth, and Community Sciences, MS
- Intercultural Youth & Family Development, MA
- Leadership in Community-based Learning, MA
- Prevention Science & Practice, M.Ed.
- Social Work with concentration in Community & Social Development, MSW
- Urban Studies with Youth Leadership concentration, MA
- Youth Work, MA
Summary: Landscape.

In short, the national landscape of YoED consists of multiple partners including youth organizations, intermediary agencies, and institutions of higher education. Any attempt at understanding the impact of YoED on staff practice must consider youth workers’ history with professional development. The number of YoEd programs is growing exponentially each year, with a 900% increase in programs in higher education over the past four years alone. In 1992, Krueger noted that “a few” university-based programs existed but none had the “size and stature” of programs of some international colleagues such as Canada and Denmark (Krueger, 1992). While the number of programs in the U.S. has grown exponentially, the “size and stature” is not known. There

The University of Minnesota has had various places where doctorates in youth-related areas were awarded; these are currently being redesigned and aligned.
remains no way to assess the number of youth workers receiving training or earning degrees each year; no way to know how many of these are volunteers versus paid staff; no central database for either finding programs or determining areas where training is overabundant or lacking. The landscape while abundant is disconnected with no wrap around system that could support multiple pathways through and between YoED.

#2. What is the knowledge base of YoED?

Youth organizations and intermediaries.

A core trait of professions is specialized, unique knowledge, often credentialed through a degree or certification process (Macdonald, 1995; Pavalko, 1988). When controlled by academic institutions, the knowledge of the profession can be too abstract, rational and scientific creating the theory-practice divide. The divide is perpetuated by the tension between scientific, empirical knowledge and non-empirical ways of knowing, e.g., including everything from ethnographic studies to ‘knowing’ through valuing, believing, and moral reasoning. It is important not to lose sight of the less formalized knowledge that permeates practice. Intuiting, sensing, feeling, knowing-of are ways of experiencing the world, and in this case, one’s work, that can be considered valid content in the professional education of youth workers. As Macdonald (1995) notes: “The content of professional work, the control of that work, differentiation in types of work and the notion of jurisdiction that the profession attempts to claim for its work are the heart of the matter and the raw material of theory” (p. 163).

A preliminary analysis suggests that training includes two types of content: stable elements (such as, values, principles, theories) and fluid elements (or, topics, headlines). The stable elements frame everything from the design of program activities, interactions, and training, to desired outcomes and evaluation. The most common organizational values (see Table 2) derive from theories of youth development such as, Erikson and Maslow, and more recently from positive youth development, synthesized in the National Research Council’s (2002) volume, Community Youth Programs to Promote Positive Youth Development. Simply put, the theories stipulate that youth development requires the satisfaction of needs. If you understand what young people need, you can intentionally design programs to meet those needs hence promoting development. The tool most widely used by youth organizations and intermediaries in their training is the YPQA pyramid developed by intermediary, the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality. The pyramid, based on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, maps the needs of youth onto the characteristics of a quality program: a safe and healthy environment, supportive and active engagement, interactions, and opportunities to plan, choose and reflect. Training based on development theories includes understanding the theories, the principles, and how these translate into practice such as, understanding how to build relationships, support mastery, or attend to the social climate. A second framework, those less apparent, is that of experiential learning, likely within the roots of John Dewey. 4-H is most clearly connected to this model with its Doing, Reflecting, and Applying circle of learning (refer to page 27 of this report).

### TABLE 2. VALUES BEHIND YOUTH-SERVING ORGANIZATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YMCA</th>
<th>4-H</th>
<th>Beacons</th>
<th>Boys &amp; Girls Club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caring</td>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>A safe place to learn and grow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>Mastery</td>
<td>High Expectations</td>
<td>Ongoing relationships with caring, adult professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect</td>
<td>Generosity</td>
<td>Engaging Activities</td>
<td>Life-enhancing programs and character development experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Opportunity to contribute Continuity</td>
<td>Hope and Opportunity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WORKING IN YOUTH SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS
Fluid elements of training are responsive to changing contexts. ‘Topics’ respond to media headlines, funding contexts, governmental/societal priorities (e.g., STEM, childhood obesity, teenage pregnancy), youth context (e.g., pop culture, hip hop, immigrant families, new ‘highs’), environmental context (e.g., environmental justice, green initiatives), school context (e.g., tutoring strategies, college admissions and preparedness), and social context (e.g., civic engagement, youth empowerment, social media, globalization). Scan any training brochure and you will see a fair mix of workshops dedicated to ‘hot topics.’

Higher education.

In higher education, the knowledge base of YoED emerges from the academic discipline. This tends to be more stable, particularly in terms of long-standing disciplinary traditions. As shown in Figure 3, there are at least seven disciplines that currently frame the study of youth/youth work. The red circles are in the tradition of the liberal arts (hence are more likely to lead to a bachelor or master of arts) while the green circles draw from the natural sciences (hence are more likely to lead to a bachelor or master of science).

These were situated in a college of human ecology, college of social science, and a college of education. There were seven programs leading to a M.S. degree; all but one was offered in a department, school or college of Agriculture/ Agricultural Education or Family Studies. There were five programs leading to a M.Ed.; three were in schools of education.

Summary: Knowledge.

The knowledge base of YoED includes stable as well as fluid content; it includes theoretical canon as well as practice knowledge; it draws from the liberal arts as well as the natural sciences. However, ‘youth development’ makes up the single most prominent body of knowledge across institution types. There are two strands of YD: traditional YD theories based on needs satisfaction (e.g., Maslow and Erikson) and PYD based on positive psychology and resiliency theory (e.g., Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). While it is beyond the scope of this work to provide a thorough analysis, suffice it to say that both are psychological interpretations and may not suffice as a complete base of understanding for those working across youth work settings. [This is explored a bit further in Phase II of this report.] In higher education, the discipline is loosely aligned to the work setting, e.g., Agricultural Education is aligned to 4-H programming, Sports & Recreation might be more clearly aligned to working in Parks & Recreation and Camps, Education might be aligned to Afterschool programs, and Social Work is aligned to civic engagement and community youth development. Currently unknown is how the knowledge base is suited for effective practice across settings. Can a youth worker educated in the discipline of Agricultural Education effectively work in a youth-centric global media program? Some have suggested a common core for the field is warranted (VanderVen, 1992). A fuller curriculum analysis
of youth-related programs in higher education is underway, with particular interest in determining how and where theory and practice converge.

#3. What is the instructional design of YoED?

YoED as defined here includes the full gamut of formal opportunities designed to support the development of one’s professional practice: modeling, supervision, reflection, research, attending conferences or workshops, mentoring, coaching, training, networks, staff meetings, degree programs, or fellowships. It also includes opportunities for learning designed informally through peer networks, reflective journeys, or inquiry projects. YoED might follow a predetermined curriculum or topics might emerge through reflection and dialogue; it might afford opportunities to interact with others from different agencies or it might be an in-house experience. These many layers of YoED can be organized into five design elements: Structure, Content, Delivery, Duration and Intensity (see Table 3). Structure has three subcategories: intra-organizational vs. inter-organizational; individual vs. group; and formal vs. informal. For instance, typically supervision occurs in-house (intra-organizational), in a one-to-one format between supervisor and staff person (individual), and occurs through informal exchanges and dialogue (informal). Comparatively, attending a Youth Studies course in a college occurs with fellow students from many organizations (inter-organization), in a group format (group), and through classroom exchange with expected rules of engagement (formal).

Content and Delivery vary by whether the Structure is an individual or group format (see Table 3). Duration, or the length of time that a youth worker is engaged in learning within any of the twelve models can range from one hour to fifteen weeks. The Intensity, a fifth element, also varies even within the model. Supervision might be very intensive, loose and haphazard, or not occur at all.

Organizations structure training at the individual and the group level, with the group made up of those from different organizations. The value of a cohort model has been suggested (Fusco, 2009; Huebner, Walker & McFarland, 2003). Yet, as will be seen, individual supervision should not be ignored. Most YoED follows a formal structure, with the curriculum being decided in advance by those conducting the training. There is usually some room for practitioner input often in the form of surveys or in vivo, but the general outline is predetermined. Individual models allow for personalized learning and targeted feedback, which cannot always happen in a group format.

If one maps Landscape by Design, one finds that not all partners offer all models (see Table 4), with the exception of Reflection/Inquiry. In fact, it seems Reflection/Inquiry is a signature model of Youthwork Education (Emslie, 2009; Fusco & Espinet, 2010; Heathfield, 2012; Herman, 2012; Hill, Matloff-Nieves, & Townsend, 2009; Huebner et al., 2003; Stein, Wood, Walker, Kimball, Outley, & Baizerman, 2005).
### TABLE 3. MAPPING YOED BY DESIGN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRUCTURE</th>
<th>Intra-Organizational</th>
<th>Inter-Organizational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>Informal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Modeling</td>
<td>Reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervision</td>
<td>Inquiry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONTENT**

In the above instances, the content of professional learning often emerges in relation to individual’s interests and needs. Either the individual decides on his/her interest/need, or his/her supervisor, mentor or coach might make a suggestion.

**DELIVERY**

Content is delivered dialogically or through self-driven inquiry or research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Workshop training (usually larger orgs. can do this in-house)</th>
<th>Staff meetings (could be Group Reflections)</th>
<th>Workshop training (usually by intermediary agency or foundation supported network)</th>
<th>Peer networks/Fellowships</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Conferences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Majors/degrees (higher ed)</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

**CONTENT**

In group structures, the content often emerges a priori in relation to stable knowledge (organizational missions, professional values and history, theoretical frameworks, or professional standards or competencies) or fluid knowledge such as topics or ‘news.’ In the case of trainings, content is known as the curriculum.

**DELIVERY**

Content is delivered through various pedagogical approaches depending on the preference of the instructor. Not uncommon would be classrooms situated in a circle formation that allows for interaction and dialogue.

### TABLE 4. MAPPING LANDSCAPE BY DESIGN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YoEd Models</th>
<th>Organizations</th>
<th>Intermediaries</th>
<th>Higher Ed</th>
<th>Informal</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Modeling Supervision</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection/Inquiry</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring/Coaching</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Workshop training/Seminar</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Staff meetings</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Courses/Degrees</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer networks/Fellowships</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary: Design.

In sum, there are at least twelve models of YoED that can be categorized into eight designs. Not all partners offer all models, with the exception of Reflection/Inquiry. Reflection/Inquiry then might be a signature YoED model of the field. Structure (group vs. individual) has received some attention with a preference for a cohort model for YoEd, which mimics the group nature of youth work. The question pursued next is not which model and structure is best, but perhaps at what point in one’s professional development is which model and structure best.

The Sphere of Youthwork Education: Phase II Findings

The purpose of creating a typology for mapping the landscape, knowledge, and design of YoED was not to find that which is superior but to locate the cases studied within the broadest spectrum of possibility. The question pursued next is not which model and structure is best, but perhaps at what point in one’s professional development is which model and structure best? First I explore theoretically the conditions that might best support youth workers to develop their professional capacity. I draw upon adult learning theory, sociocultural theory, and critical pedagogy to draw out some possible conditions. Then, I will provide a snapshot of each of the cases addressing how each case views youth, youth work, and youthwork education, and land on a social capital understanding to ‘capacity’ building.

I have purposefully chosen to take an interdisciplinary approach, studying YoED geographically, linguistically, sociologically, and anthropologically. As such, the “data” arrive not only through social scientific traditions such as observation and interviews but through mapping, artifacts, linguistic and content analysis. The sphere of youthwork education is rotated geometrically to look at the places and spaces it occurs; sliced anthropologically to examine the cultural traditions and influences in between; and lifted to see what human understandings of youth, work, youth work, and education lie underneath (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. The Sphere of Youthwork Education

#4. What conditions are needed for youth workers to develop their professional capacity with and on behalf of young people?

Twenty years ago, on-the-job experience and supervision were considered to be the two most important contributors to job effectiveness (Zeldin, 1993). Today, the findings unequivocally support that formal training and education play a significant role in the professional development of child and youth workers (AED, 2002; Akiva, 2005; Arnett, 1989; Bouffard & Little, 2004; Collins, 2010; Collins, Hill & Miranda, 2008; Cornerstone for Kids, 2006; Deen & Bailey, 2004; Fusco, 2009; Ghazvini & Mullis, 2002; Hartje et al., 2008; Huebner et al., 2003; Jones & Downing, 2006; Kontos, Howes,
Shinn, & Galinsky, 1995; McCabe & Cochran, 2006; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 1996; Ross, Buglione & Safford-Farquharson, 2011; Shek & Wai, 2008; Stein, Wood, Walker, Kimball, Outley, & Baizerman, 2005; Vile, Russell, Miller & Reisner, 2008; Weaver, 2002). We no longer need to ask, is training effective, but what are the conditions of training that are necessary in order to be effective?

By virtue of how we teach, we educate youth workers. The type of pedagogy that we utilize mirrors our beliefs and philosophies about the nature of teacher/student relationship and of education. We model these beliefs in everything from how we arrange the classroom, to what we select for the readings, to the nature of our assignments and our assessments, to how much room we leave for students to co-create the learning environment with us. Here I discuss different pedagogical theories in order to explore the conditions of learning that might best be suited for building the professional capacity of youth workers. As we have come to understand youth development as requiring more than a one-shot dose of program so too should we see youthwork education as needing ongoing and varied opportunities to develop. In this way, I am drawn to thinking about the development of professional capacity, rather than professional development. Here, I define professional capacity as embodied change that emerges slowly and over time in relation to participating in a nexus of professional education. I draw upon different learning theories primarily because no one theory on its own seemed to sufficiently explicate the model of learning-for-professional-capacity that I was seeking to describe. I do not go deep here but paint broad strokes to arrive at a model of YoED that is longitudinal, collaborative, and accounts for not only what one learns (knowledge and competencies) but what one becomes (a professional and a leader).

Adult learning theory.

Malcolm Knowles was among the first to articulate that adults require a distinct set of conditions for learning than children (Knowles, 1980). He postulated that adults learn best when they choose to participate, have control over the direction and timing of learning, can draw upon their prior experiences, see relevancy and practicality to their work, and are treated with mutual respect. To Knowles, these are the basic conditions under which adults learn best: Choice, Control, Input, Relevancy, and Respect. The model has been tested with good success. In designing a professional training for youth workers, Huebner, Walker and McFarland (2003) note: “Heeding advice not to discount participant expertise gained by experience on the job, the team adopted a model of shared learning with trainer as facilitator (not expert) and youth workers as experienced practitioners” (p. 214). Improvements in practitioner knowledge were reported in almost all targeted areas.

Given the above conditions, one would reasonably expect participant reactions to training to be positive. That is, it is rather assured that participants would believe that their time was well spent, that the material made sense and was useful, and that they learned something interesting (or what Kirkpatrick’s (1959) evaluation model would deem Level 1: Participant Reaction). It is also likely that there would be evidence of meeting higher taxonomic objectives of learning and/or affect such as, an increased understanding of youth development principles. Yet, adult learning theory might not go far enough in explaining how new knowledge translates into practice. That is, Choice, Control, Input, Relevancy, and Respect provide a good stage for tuning-in to new information but knowing is not doing.

Sociocultural theory.

A second theoretical model that might be useful is sociocultural theory. Stemming from the writings of Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that learning results from participation in situated activity. Rather than the abstract concepts learned in school, situated activity illustrates that learning is embedded in a cultural milieu. Brown, Collins and Duguid (1989) emphasize the idea of cognitive apprenticeship as a needed epistemology for learning. Using this theoretical frame, we see that knowledge needs to be grounded in an authentic context, and requires social interaction and participation. Gone is the passive learner who sits and listens to the teachings of a lecturer. Enter the active learner who participates in situated activities that are
contextual and authentic. Seen in this light, YoED might be seen as an apprenticeship into the craft. Apprenticeship is beyond ‘knowing.’ It is doing/acting, and for the professions, being (Barnett & Coate, 2005). Barnett and Coate (2005) found that not all academic disciplines support all three types of student engagement and that ‘being’ is the most neglected. They claim, “Being is the most significant of the three dimensions in that without it the others cannot take off. A student cannot be expected to try to get on the inside of a discipline (with the arduousness that entails) and engage in challenging practical tasks unless the student has a firm self (a ‘self-confidence’); curricula, properly framed, can assist the development of a firm self” (p.164). In this way, students ‘become’ the result of their studies through not only knowing and acting within the discipline but being within it.

This ‘firm self’ has been measured as self-efficacy (Collins, 2010; Ross, Buglione & Safford-Farquharson, 2011; Shek & Wai, 2008). Youth workers can leave training feeling refreshed and with new ideas but if they do not possess the tools for implementing an action, they cannot develop efficacy. As discussed by Ross et al. (2011), while there is some evidence that training can increase youth worker self-confidence and efficacy, there is little explicit attention to efficacy as a desired outcome of training. To reverse this trend, the Healthy Options for Prevention and Education (HOPE) Coalition in Massachusetts, a youth–adult partnership committed to reducing youth violence and substance use and to promoting positive adolescent mental health and youth voice in the city, designed the 13-week, citywide training institute. Improvements were found on the Working with Youth Competency Scale and the General Self Efficacy Scale, though the small sample size limited the capacity to run statistical tests. Self-efficacy means one has developed a sense that they can do the job well.

A second way to cast ‘self’ is as relational (see Fusco, 2012d). Self includes emotions, compassion, humility, acceptance, humor, what one knows (schooled knowledge and lived experience), what one thinks they know (metacognitive knowledge), what is not yet known but thinkable (creativity, resourcefulness, reflections), and what one does (the actions one takes including ‘reaching out’ through small gestures, communication, rapport, listening, picking up the phone to call a parent, drawing upon resources) and one uses self to cast a relational web (Fusco, 2012c). ‘Being’ in role as youth worker helps develop the skills, the tools, the self-efficacy, and the use of self that might all lead to changes in practice. “Youth work is a way of being, in which workers and youth create new moments that become part of their evolving narratives and view of self” (Krueger, 2007, p. 55). Garfat (2003) for instance notes that effective child and youth care workers are actively self-aware, distinguish self from other, and use aspects of self in relationships with youth. There is a growing nuanced understanding of practice such as noticeable attention to context and shifts in context (Krueger & Stuart, 1999). Such ‘being’ can be supported with on-the-job experience under supervision. Feedback and guidance are critical components in this process. Supervision here is a playing back of ‘self’ (Fewster, 1990), or seeing ‘self’ in other. It means that in ‘being’ a youth worker one constantly has to work on ‘self.’

Critical pedagogy.

One can ‘be’ a competent youth worker with knowledge of youth, youth work principles, good use of self and efficacy and yet, little understanding of the broader social and political issues within which youth and communities are functioning. If change is focused on individual youth, without attention to the social conditions, then one might argue that the practice is something other than youth work. Youth work is often the location of youth development for the simple fact that it is centered on the non-oppressive relationship. To the extent that youth work mimics the type of authoritarian relationships typical in institutionalized settings, e.g., those that re-produce the status quo, youth development will no longer be the outcome. Here I draw from critical pedagogues who insist on education as a form of increased consciousness regarding oppressive social conditions. Drawing upon the dialogical method of Paulo Freire, the classroom is a site that is co-created by teachers and students alike in order to liberate one’s mind. It is a ‘pedagogy of hope’ (hooks, 2003). This might mean questioning adult assumptions of ‘developmental superiority’ whereby as ‘youth’ becomes visible, adults become invisible (Skott-Myhre, 2006).
the midst of youth work wondered why I was working with the youth and not the adults. The adults clearly both needed more help and were the ones making the lives of the young people anti-developmental!] In the spirit of Freire one could argue that education should not stop at increased awareness or knowledge but requires action, and knowledge from action (Friere, 1970). Here participatory action research and inquiry are some tools for engaging in learning for social change. Peer networks and other group structures are also modes for using critical dialogue to create new communities of practice. It is through such dialogue that what we know is called into question remaining at all times open to scrutiny.

**Summary: Conditions.**

Drawing upon several theoretical models, one begins to see that if professional development is to impact the becoming of a professional it must go beyond one-shot training. Here I propose we consider the development of professional capacity as embodied change that requires knowing, being and acting. Knowing, being and acting are facilitated by choice, control, input, relevancy, respect, feedback, supervision, playing back of “self,” reflection, dialogue, inquiry, and consciousness raising. We might now look at how various models of YoED can create such conditions. Here I look at four Minnesota cases of YoED. Two are conducted by youth-serving organizations, 4-H and Minneapolis Beacons; one is conducted by an intermediary, the Extension Center for Youth Development; and the final one is conducted by an institution of higher education, the programs in youth studies and youth leadership at the University of Minnesota.

**#5. How do the current approaches to YoED emerge from and inform our understanding(s) of youth/work/education?**

**4-H and Minneapolis Beacons.**

YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS -- INTRA-ORGANIZATION -- FORMAL -- GROUP

4Note that here ‘professional’ refers to the sociological undertaking of participating in the profession, not acting professionally, which presumably is already under-foot.

4-H operates at a county level. There are 87 counties in Minnesota and they each run 4-H programs, allowing young people’s interests to drive the activities. The content is used as a tool to support young people to take ownership of their learning (interview M. Kawase and J. Russo, 11/7/11). Approximately 33,000 young people in Minnesota are enrolled in a 4-H club; another 120,000 are involved in short-term learning experiences (interview D. Freeman, 11/1/11). The history of 4-H goes back to the canning clubs and the work of Extension centers in promoting agricultural progress but today has included urban youth development. 4-H views youth development as a process that requires active engagement and caring relationships. The philosophy of learning-by-doing means education is experiential. ‘Youth’ and youth work are seen through three frames: Agriculture Ed & Life Sciences, Education, and Development.

As a national youth-serving organization, local 4-H sites have the advantage of a home model built from theoretical principles and practices for the work that can deliver resources for training and professional development. There are approximately 3500 full-time paid youth workers (once known as agents or more recently, extension educators) throughout the 4-H national system with about two-thirds of states requiring agents to have a bachelor’s degree (Astroth, 2007). Mostly 4-H clubs are operated by volunteers, with the exception of county leaders. Volunteers must attend an orientation, which can be done online in thirty minutes [http://www1.extension.umn.edu/youth/mn4-H/volunteer/orientation-video-1.html]. The 30-minute session covers five areas: 1) history, mission, pledge, motto and slogan; 2) creating a positive learning environment with youth; 3) connecting with staff to choose the best volunteer role; 4) organizational stewardship; and 5) resources. The orientation includes an overview of Positive Youth Development and covers four essential elements of youth development: Belonging, Mastery, Generosity and Independence through the process of Experiential Learning (Doing, Reflecting, Applying learning cycle). In addition to the orientation, there are several statewide trainings throughout the year that focus on a specific method such as how to integrate service learning into the 4-H curriculum. Volunteers and staff can also enroll in the Youth Practice Matters training.
offered by the University of Minnesota’s Extension Center for Youth Development, see below, but it is the paid staff who are required to conduct the training and supervision of the volunteers. Their capacity to do this is subsumed under the requirement of a degree as entry to the position; there is no specific supervisory training.

Two key outcomes are expected of 4-H participants: 1) learning and 2) leading as engaged citizens (interview D. Freeman, 11/1/11). Minnesota 4-H is in the process of developing two models called “ladders of learning” and “ladders of leadership” that explicate these outcomes. Research on the models is underway (email correspondence, J. Skuza, 3/6/11). According to Dorothy Freeman, the state leader, the next step in the 4-H organization in Minnesota is to define staff development in relation to these outcomes. “Staff should have periphery understanding of the developmental stages, stages and ages, so that you understand the average; they should know how to work with people and delegate; and they should know how to support volunteers and do fund-raising” (interview D. Freeman, 11/1/11).

Last year the Minnesota 4-H staff were trained on the YPQA in order to offer practice with greater intentionality. When asked what makes for professional staff, Dr. Freeman notes, “models of success come from finding passionate people” who can be guided to learn how to ask young people questions so youth can open the doors to learning.

Like 4-H, Beacons are a national model for youth development. Beacons are highly effective community centers located in public schools. The model began in 1991 as an initiative of the City of New York and the Youth Development Institute (YDI) in New York City. Today Beacons serve approximately 250,000 participants annually across six cities – Denver, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, New York, San Francisco, and West Palm Beach. The Minneapolis Beacons serves over 2,500 children and youth after school and during the summer per year in eight different centers throughout the city. The Beacon afterschool program also follows a ‘club model’ with activity choice for the participants.

Each center employs a center director and a program director as well as frontline staff. The Beacons Network Director is responsible for joint collaborative activities including cross agency training, quality assessment, evaluation, and youth-adult partnership and youth engagement strategies. The Minneapolis Beacons Director, Jenny Wright-Collins, is guided by a personal manifesto, which includes 11 principles. These include the belief that youth and their communities possess valuable assets and strengths and as such are partners in development, not problems to be solved. These values make up what has playfully been dubbed by staff as “the Beacon way” (interview H. Tompkins, 11/1/11). The Network Director engages the center and program directors in deep thinking about “the Beacon way” and empowers them to each think about how to “Beaconize” their centers.

They reflect on how they are doing and is aligned to the Beacon values in a shared atmosphere of mutual respect and trust, an atmosphere that mirrors the very values and principles they want the staff to create and model with the young people. In fact, by design every aspect of the training mirrors the values of the organization from beginning with an icebreaker in order to establish relationships to working on a challenging issue and solving the problem together. They learn the values by engaging in activities that bring those principles to life and through that lived experience in the training have a deepened and renewed sense of purpose that they bring back to their individual centers. It helps that some of the staff are alumni of the program and “grew up Beaconized.” The culture is described as ‘home,’ a place where “we each put in our strengths, what we bring to the table, mix it up with what the kids have and make something new” (interview H. Tompkins, 11/1/11). They also use the YPQA to guide their work.

Youth Work Institute of the Extension Center for Youth Development

INTERMEDIARY -- INTER-ORGANIZATION -- FORMAL -- GROUP

The Youth Program Quality Assessment tool (YPQA) was developed by High/Scope Educational Research Foundation and focuses on key areas of quality at the point where staff and youth interact: a safe and supportive environment, youth/adult and peer interactions, and youth engagement. The YPQA helps staff to objectively identify program strengths and gaps, and is linked to training modules that help address self-identified areas for improvement.
The Extension Center for Youth Development offers eight “signature” programs through its Youth Work Institute: Culturally Responsive Youth Work Matters, Deliberate Practice Matters, Evaluation Matters, Intentional Program Design Matters, Leadership Matters, Quality Matters, Youth Engagement Matters, and Youth Work Matters. The Youth Work Institute is “dedicated to expanding the knowledge and strengthening the practices of Minnesota’s out-of-school-time program staff and volunteers who help youth learn, lead and contribute.” Youth Work Matters is considered the “foundations” course providing an overview of theories of positive youth development. It began in the late 1990’s as the BEST (Building Exemplary Systems for Training Youth Workers) Advancing Youth Development curriculum of the Academy for Educational Development (AED). The curriculum has since been adapted to respond to new staff and what they each bring is grounded in the most current youth development theories and research and is delivered by Extension faculty. The central Institute philosophy is to bridge research to practice. For instance, Quality Matters was based on the research that training alone is insufficient for making changes in practice without understanding the broader context of the organization (interview D. Moore, 11/8/11).

By working with leaders and practitioners in the same project it gives more space to apply learning from the YWI “classrooms” in real contexts and creates a shared commitment across staff in different roles. The design addresses both practice change and organizational capacity at once (D. Moore, email communication, 3/8/12).

Deliberate Practice Matters emerged from research that looked at how ‘experts’ approach dilemmas of practice with greater complexity than ‘novices’ (interview K. Walker, 11/2/11). Leadership Matters is a curriculum focused on professional development for youth work supervisors. The course provides opportunities for exploration and reflection about youth work supervision, management and leadership principles and practices as well as exploration of strengths based leadership, the role of supervisor in recognizing and implementing core competencies and conveying youth work as a profession (email correspondence, M. Herman, 4/6/11). Across the signature courses, is a set curriculum with opportunities for participants to interact, reflect, and apply concepts to practice. The delivery might best be described as presentation of content alongside hands-on activities meant to ensure that knowledge is transferred to practice, or more succinctly, as “supporting the artfuls to be more intentional about their work with young people” (interview C. Gran, 11/2/11).

The National Afterschool Matters Fellowship is a national model that for the past two years has operated a site at the Extension Center for Youth Development. The fellowship is a yearlong professional development opportunity for mid-level career professionals. In a cohort, the fellows engage in action research, a writing retreat, and a research roundtable at the end of the year. The 2010-2011 cohort in Minnesota studied topics including supervision, mentoring, Latina youth development, professional development practices, volunteers, and closing the racial learning gap. In addition to professional development for those who are engaged in the process, the practitioner research is considered critical to the field’s knowledge production (see Hill, Matloff-Nieves, & Townsend, 2009).

The Walkabout Fellowship, new this year, is modeled after the National Afterschool Matters Fellowship, which encourages practitioners to engage in critical inquiry through reading, discussion and writing. Sponsored by the MN Department of Education and the Extension Center for Youth Development, the practitioner cohort meets monthly as a group to discuss key readings and issues that arise from critical inquiry into their own practice. The fellowship is using the text, Advancing Youth Work: Current Trends, Critical Questions (Fusco, 2012a) to stimulate discussions. The aim for the Walkabout Fellowship is to elevate the wisdom of practice, apply it to important questions in the field, and share practitioner perspectives broadly through written and public presentations. 

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*From 2002-2005, there was an eighth course, Engaging Community. Led by Cece Gran, the course(s) were driven by community design teams, which included elders from Native, Hmong and Somali local communities.*
“We want a new kind of “profession” or “recognized expertise,” one not based on the usual models, but open to change, responsive, innovative, flexible with the times” (J. Walker, Exhibit B, see Appendix A). Because practice wisdom is often under-represented in state and local policy discussions, the inquiries are structured to explore three field-building questions related to expertise/wisdom, education/professional development, and respect/public value:

- What would happen to youth work in Minnesota if we adopted a broadly shared understanding of youth work values, principles, and ethics?
- What are the implications of claiming youth work as a field, a discipline or a practice?
- What would happen to youth work in Minnesota if we had a creative system of expectations and accountability for youth workers?

There are fourteen practitioners involved in addressing these questions facilitated by a team of former practitioners now working in university, state agency and community roles. The final position papers will be presented in September 2012 at the Walkabout Roundtable.

*Degree programs in the School of Social Work.*

**HIGHER EDUCATION -- INTER-ORGANIZATION -- FORMAL -- GROUP**

The College of Education and Human Development’s School of Social Work has three options for students interested in pursuing an education in Youth Studies: A Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Youth Studies, a 16-credit minor in Youth Studies, and a Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Youth Development Leadership. Students begin the undergraduate major or minor with one of two preparatory courses, Seeing Youth, Thinking Youth: Media, Popular Media, and Scholarship or Introduction to Youth Studies: Understanding Youth, Young People, Youthhood, and Youth Work. The major is followed by six Foundation courses: Urban Youth & Urban Youth Issues; Introduction to Experiential Learning; History and Philosophy of Youthwork; Adolescent and Youth Development; Introduction to Youth Studies; and Research Methods. Students then take nine credits from the Professional Core, which is more context- and content-specific than the foundation courses dealing with youth issues such as sexuality and youth work issues such as using theatre activities. In the final year, students do a 4-credit internship and conduct youth program evaluation research. According to the website: “The major emphasizes civic engagement for young people marginalized in their communities.” The YDL masters program includes four core courses: The Everyday Lives of Youth; Experiential Learning; Organizational Approaches to Youth Development; and Community Context for Youth Development Leadership. In addition, students design four 1-credit seminars, participate in a four-credit field experience, and take ten elective credits in interdisciplinary work.

The teaching approach in YDL can be described as non-hierarchical and experiential. Jerome Stein sees his teaching as helping students to ‘think non-programmatically’ achieved through the phenomenology of experience (interview J. Stein, 11/7/11). In fact, the classroom was often seen as a site for youth work. “I teach with who is in the room, so things change constantly” (interview K. Johnston-Goodstar, 11/8/11). I saw this exemplified in the following exchange which occurred in Ross Velure Roholt’s Youth Studies 1001 class, Seeing youth, thinking “youth”: Media, popular media & scholarship (classroom observation, 11/8/11). He began class with a thought: “Questions come from experience. Experience is diverse.” During the course of the conversation, a black female student begins discussing the philosophy of W.E.B. Dubois. The student is invited to lead the class while the professor takes her seat in the back row. Professor Roholt states, “sometimes being a good youth worker means knowing when to get out of the way.” An exchange ensues between the student-now-teacher (SNT) and a white female student (WFS) sitting in the front:

SNT: I am Black before I am a person.

WFS: That’s a strong statement.

SNT: I see myself as Black first, then a Black person.

WFS: I see myself as a person first.
ECHOS FROM THE BACK, MYSELF
INCLUDED: That’s privilege.

WFS: AH!!!!!!!

This exchange led to a discussion of white youth workers ‘helping’ in black communities. The pedagogy of the classroom led to the uncovering of racial assumptions and biases that members of the class held. “When we stop thinking and evaluating along the lines of hierarchy and can value rightly all members of a community we are breaking a culture of domination” (hooks, 2003, p. 37). In addition, examining the role of race and youthwork practice, the Youth Studies program breaks open our “truths” about youth (interview K. Johnston-Goodstar, 11/8/11).

Katie Johnston-Goodstar exemplified this in her Youth Studies 3001, History and Philosophy of Youthwork class through using a Genealogy of Youthhood project. Drawing upon her critical pedagogical teaching philosophy as well as the history work of Dr. Henry Louis Gates at Harvard University, Professor Johnston-Goodstar, uses students’ own stories to teach the history of youth, youth philosophy and youth policy. The students had to select one ancestor, present their family tree, the ancestor’s daily life, the geographical spaces they inhabited, the political times they grew up in and the community (culture, tradition, norms etc) that surrounded them. In my observation of the classroom, it seemed the goal of learning about youth in the context of history was realized. The pedagogical technique was certainly one that seemed more efficient for learning-as-changing-being than if the professor had lectured on various histories and the contexts that surrounded ‘youthhoods.’

Summary: Approaches.

The cases described here are used to reflect how YoED emerges from our understandings of youth and youthwork. In the case of 4-H, the approach to YoED begins with understanding the developmental needs of youth and the pedagogical needs to learn by doing or by experience. The program supports young people to find their passion and lead through agency. Staff development in the Minnesota 4-H seems to be heading in the direction of creating agents of change within the volunteers. Arguably, it would seem that the YoED of 4-H should be closely aligned to the cycle of experiential learning that they use in their programs (Do, Reflect, Apply). In the case of the Minneapolis Beacon, the Positive Youth Development framework seems supported by group work principles and these principles are embodied in the training of the staff or being “Beaconized.” Being “beaconized” is an ongoing process of learning and group reflection. The Extension Center is also grounded in a PYD framework with roots in the AYD curriculum. Recently, the Center has come to understand that youth development principles cannot be supported in practice without full organizational buy in and that training has to be complemented by understanding real cases (dilemmas) of practice. They also offer one of the few curricula that target supervisors (Leadership Matters), which as will be seen below is a critical component to an effective collaborative system. Competencies are less the focus of the signature programs than are professional judgment and reflective thinking. Reflective practice, action research, and inquiry projects are the hallmark of the fellowship programs. These programs have an explicit goal of fostering leadership and giving practitioners opportunities to contribute to the field’s knowledge base.

Finally, the degree programs have deep roots in diverse, historical and international understandings of youth and youthwork practice. The faculty represents a diverse body of knowledge and experience and bring that to their classrooms. The teaching is experiential and non-hierarchical with multiple opportunities for student participation and leadership, not just in the classroom but in the community. What is most impressive about the degree courses is the opportunity to play with ideas and take a philosophical and
critical stance to ideas and practice. This may be a function of the particular faculty, and not necessarily a characteristic of degree programs in general, though observations at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the University of Pittsburgh suggested a similar approach to teaching/learning. What seems common to these programs is the lack of ‘foundations’ typical in professional education. That is, the education of teachers, counselors and other human service workers often begins in the Cartesian dualism with knowledge about (foundational knowledge) as the entry. Students learn about the foundational knowledge and have a “spectator relationship” to it (VanderVen, 2009). If one removes the dichotomy between theory and practice one is left constructing frames of understanding for their experiences; this very much seems to be the stance taken at the University of Minnesota. VanderVen describes good professional education as beginning in practice (not foundations) where reflecting on the cognitive dissonance that emerges when real-world bounces against existing schemas leads to conceptual changes (in a direction that is more developmental). She describes a hermeneutic approach, which encourages people to reflect on three questions: What did you see? What did you do? What do you think about it? (Interview, K.VanderVen, 3/12/12).

As a collective, YoED offered by multiple partners provides a complement in understandings of youth and youthwork, as well as more general theories of youth development, philosophical epistemologies, and research on/with youthwork communities.

**Partners, Perspectives, and Pedagogies**

Mapping the geographical spaces where and how youthwork education occurred included examining its landscape, knowledge base, and instructional design. This mapping process revealed a sphere that collectively provides youth workers access to multiple partners, perspectives, and pedagogies. I am inclined to now ask: Is the education of a practitioner the same as the education of a professional or of a leader? It seems that the training of practitioners relies heavily on competency frameworks with the goal of teaching skills and appropriate professional behavior(s). Conversely, the education of professionals encourages critical thinking, professional judgment, and ethics. Producing leaders is of yet another ilk. We ‘cultivate’ leaders promoting freedom of thinking, creativity, and character. Previously I have questioned whether competencies and professional judgment are competing tendencies.

_Can someone be an incompetent expert? A competent novice? To whom is expertise entrusted: scholars? practitioners? youth? What else is required in the development of expertise not included in our current reliance on cognitive models of professional education? These questions allow us to consider what the role of “good” youth work education might be and the multiple pathways towards becoming a master practitioner (Fusco, 2012, p. 220)._

I am now inclined to think that all are necessary but maybe at different times in one’s professional trajectory. This becomes particularly salient when considering educational needs in relation to worker roles and responsibilities (see Figure 5). Roles prepare one to participate in different cultures of practice, e.g., the role of parent is different than the role of cousin; the role of teacher is different than the role of principal; and the role of youth worker is different than the role of supervisor or trainer. Upon hire, the work of the practitioner begins with understanding the organization, its mission and its values and their role in it. It also begins with an understanding of young people, how to connect with them, how to promote their development, and how to engage them in positive ways. Depending on the organization, this understanding may or may not develop intentionally through an orientation and then with training. Minimally, it should develop through modeling of core values within the organization. Values can be modeled in everything from how activities are designed, to staff-youth interactions, staff-staff interactions, criteria for worker performance evaluations, etc. How staff is engaged should not be so removed from how the youth are engaged, e.g., as valuable members of the team who bring strengths and talents. These early understandings
of how to “be” a youth worker provide the entry youth worker with a frame for understanding their work that is tied to the organizational context.

Moving from beginner (or new hire) to early practitioner requires core competencies that help build relational skills as well as one’s confidence and efficacy in the work. Training should provide adult learners with choice, control and input over the topic, pace of learning, and the organization of learning. Trainers need to account for different ways of knowing and learning among staff the same way they might account for such differences among young people. The content of training should be relevant to the organizational setting as well as to the roles that staff carry out. It should also be relevant to the particular youth, families and communities within the neighborhoods served.

This was brought home recently by Estaban Ramos, Executive Director of Fresh Youth Initiatives, in New York City who stated: “You have a program where you are inspiring in your young girls how to be assertive and independent and then they go home and are called ‘defiant’ and have to kneel on several cups of raw rice.” (Next Gen session at National Afterschool Association conference, April 3, 2012).

While orientation and training ground one in the values and practice knowledge necessary to begin the work, as one enters the day-to-day mill, difficult situations arise. Issues of ‘self’ get in the way of seeing situations without bias and predetermined judgment. One needs ongoing supervision with opportunities for dialogue, feedback and reflection. And, supervisors need their own training in how to supervise (Herman, 2012). In fact, I would argue that if the field is to continue to move in the direction of credentialing, it is supervisors who should be credentialed, not part-time, frontline staff. Supervision should help deepen one’s craft and develop efficacy for the work. As practitioners come to see themselves as successful youth workers, some percentage of them will transition into having a prolonged view of a youth work career. It is at this time critical that youth workers are exposed to the vast opportunities to participate in the profession as master practitioners. Joining peer networks, membership organizations, professional associations, attending or presenting at conferences, advocating, sitting on a board, etc. are activities that allow one to connect to those outside of their own organization and feel a part of and contribute to the broader profession within which one works. These opportunities also provide social capital giving access to information and influence, as well as supporting mental well being (Small, 2009).

Organizations can be effective brokers by providing opportunities to form social ties outside of the organization by supporting staff to attend conferences and participate in local, regional, national and even international associations. Larger organizations often are networked with other large organizations providing staff with potential connections through such alliances. From the perspective of social capital theory, the landscape, knowledge base, and design of professional education take on a different meaning providing access to information, services, and material goods through formal and informal networks (Small, 2009). The model suggests that the conditions for learning might not be the same as the conditions necessary for the development of professional capacity. The development of capacity is not a growing of cognition but an enrichment of one’s social ‘funds’ that is highly affected by the capital of the organization. Smaller organizations might have the benefit of providing personalized supervision but may lack access to external networks and resources that larger organizations can provide. Conversely, smaller organizations may have better networks because they have had to develop them for their survival while larger organizations may see themselves as self-sufficient.

Yet, in-house training can extend the resources of staff only to that which is available within the group. Intermediaries who bring together staff from different organizations offer greater opportunities to develop social capital, as do institutions of higher education. The latter also provides access to a wide scope of academic knowledge across disciplines. The landscape also includes how these institutions connect with each other in supporting the development of professional capacity. For instance, a college instructor might invite a community organizer to his classroom to discuss current youth-related issues or a youth-service organizer might ask a college admissions officer to conduct a training session on how to help youth write a winning admissions essay. Here the landscape and design of YoEd can extend the knowledge base beyond
what each might offer on its own. This sociological perspective reinforces the notion that multiple partners are necessary to maximize the full range of benefits to professional capacity building.

Contributing to the profession also means contributing to the body of knowledge of discipline(s) upon which the craft rests. A body of practice knowledge helps the field articulate its artistry and its impact. Inquiry and action research are two common models that support practitioner’s burning questions, emerging organically from experience. Organizations that provide support for inquiry also benefit by creating a culture of learning and ongoing development. Participating in the profession can morph into leadership possibilities, e.g., when one joins a membership organization and is later asked to join an advisory board for developing a competency framework. I was highly concerned when recently a youth worker, clearly overworked and burnt out, suggested that ‘leadership’ could not be placed on organizations that were already too burdened. The suggestion that leadership and field building rest on those outside of the practice is risky business. There needs to be a partnership in all levels of participation but her point was well taken - currently, programs are struggling for survival and professional capacity building is not even on the proverbial ‘back burner.’ Ironically, the very thing that may alleviate burnout is not an option for some right now.

Institutions of higher education are in a strong position to support the leadership of youth workers and this can take many forms. For instance, Cornell University’s College of Human Ecology recently launched its Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research with the goal of better linking research, practice and policy. One project, the Cornell Youth in Society Program, is working to create networks linking programs supporting the transition to adulthood of vulnerable youth with universities to conduct action research. A second project, ACT (Assets Coming Together), employs youth-involved participatory evaluation and research. This youth participatory evaluation model, led by Jane Powers, serves not only to generate knowledge about program outcomes but also generates positive outcomes for youth, practitioners, and programs. When partnerships with higher education occur in the communities, the result is a rich and meaningful mix of applied research for social change. A third example comes from the Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Community Youth Work team, led by Kathy Korum, in collaboration with University faculty member, Michael Baizerman, and several of his graduate students. The goal of the collaboration is to develop a training model that puts into place a support system for new “rec leaders.” The model itself emerged at the table with staff at different levels of experience and expertise developing it. The existing staff will serve as trainers helping each trainee develop an individualized training plan which will cover a) youth worker skills and skill level, b) ‘difficult situations’, and c) staff roles articulated across three levels of expertise: Beginner, Tweener, and Expert. The trainer, his/her supervisor, and the site supervisor will meet regularly to ensure the model is working. The director describes the process as “changing the culture of practice by trying to build rec leaders that do youth work.”

These collaborative examples have embedded in the partnership a capacity to feed the broader knowledge base of the field. This ‘naming’ of practice and practice knowledge is a necessary part of field building. As youth workers move through various roles their knowing how to do the work can be useful later in their learning what to name it. As VanderVen (2009) suggests, “effective professional education might begin in practice that is rooted in and focused on daily life or direct experience and activity in context and consider how people subjectively acquire and interpret pure knowledge according to their own individual frameworks” (p. 195)
### Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Job Experience &amp; Supervision</th>
<th>Peer Learning Networks</th>
<th>Degree Programs</th>
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<tr>
<td>· Values</td>
<td>· Choice</td>
<td>· Supervision</td>
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<td>· Strengths-based</td>
<td>· Control</td>
<td>· Feedback</td>
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<td>· Modeling</td>
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### Characteristics

- Knowledge About: the Organization, Youth, Youth Work, Community, Theories and Principles
- Knowing How: Practice Knowledge, Skills, Efficacy, Use of Self
- Knowing When: Nuanced Understandings of Youth and Youth Work (Context), Agency
- Knowing Not: Philosophical Stance/Questioning/Open to Scrutiny
- Contributions to the Field and Body of (Practice) Knowledge

Figure 5. Developing the Professional Capacity of Youth Workers through YoED
Conclusion

The landscape of Youthwork Education is abundant including multiple partners (youth-serving organizations, intermediaries, and institutions of higher education) who offer formal training and education, as well as informal, self-driven models of professional growth. Distinctions can be made across twelve identified YoEd models in the following elements: Structure, Content, Delivery, Duration and Intensity. Like youth development, outcomes do not result from one program dose but from a nexus of ongoing and varied opportunities. Any attempt at understanding the impact of Youthwork Education on professional capacity must consider youth workers’ history with professional development. Existing research unequivocally supports that formal training and education plays a role in the professional capacity of child and youth workers; thus, the question that can be explored is, what conditions are needed to support the development of professional capacity? Using different learning theories, some conditions were highlighted: choice, control, input, relevancy, respect, feedback, supervision, playing back of ‘self,’ reflection, dialogue, inquiry, and consciousness raising. Professional capacity develops along a trajectory which includes knowledge about youth and youth work, skills, self-efficacy, use of self, a nuanced understanding of the social conditions of youthhood, the capacity to engage in inquiry and research, and the capacity to engage as a leader in the field (see Figure 5). Different partners of Youthwork Education are best positioned to support different aspects of professional capacity building. A collaborative approach would allow for the development of professional capacity to be supported by different partners, perspectives and pedagogies.

I began this journey with the simple goal of mapping youthwork education across the country in the hope of determining where and how attention was being paid to helping youth workers learn how to build developmentally-responsive relationships (see Fusco, 2007). If one is committed to the journey and not the outcome, then the pathways to follow along the way become numerous. I have traveled down many that were tangential but educative. The result is that I have gone broad in my explorations. Even in such a broad sweep, I am guaranteed to have missed much along the way. That said, what resulted are realizations that while perhaps not new in isolation have led to a casting of professional education as needing to be collaborative in design, holistic and longitudinal in outcome, and not as distinct from youthwork practice itself.

While hopefully useful, I am also highly aware of the problem of trying to summarize the rich, complex and dynamic data I have collected over the past year into a short and abbreviated summation of that work. What I fear I have lost is the humanness of the work ~ the joy, the struggles, the fears, the challenges, the optimism, the commitment. When one digs a bit deeper people begin to talk about the “models of success lying within people’s passion,” support of the “artfuls” and finding the “Beacon way.” People return to the heart of the matter. I was struck by a suggestion made by award winning singer, Jewel, to an up-and-coming, untrained artist who was ‘battling’ against a trained singer on the Voice, “. . . sometimes when people get that trained it’s hard for them to get back in their heart because they become so technical; it doesn’t always feel as gritty and emotional.” Here I looked at youthwork education in the United States in order to explore the tension between a trial-by-fire approach to training versus the overtraining that can lead to the ‘anesthesia of the expert’ or the loss of ‘heart.’ I pondered whether by design we are supporting the development of practitioners who while trained in an understanding of youth, know that the understanding they hold should at all times remain open to scrutiny. While I cannot confirm this is the case without having collected data from the participants in youthwork education, it is at least possible to state that the pedagogical methods of reflection, inquiry, hermeneutic circles, and the philosophical stances taken up in classes position knowledge and knowing not as end products but as processes within the learning journey that require ongoing visitation.

My own understanding should also remain open to such scrutiny. [Please send thoughts, comments, and feedback to Dr. Dana Fusco at dfusco@york.cuny.edu.]
References


Routledge.


Quinn, J. (2012). Advancing youth work:


VanderVen, K. (2009). If theory and practice were the same, then what? A new approach to designing professional education. *Child & Youth Services, 31*, 188-212.


Appendix A
Data Sources

I. Notes from interviews and observations

Case Study Interviews
- Jenny Collins, Minneapolis Beacons Network Director, 11/1/11
- Kari Dennisen-Cunnien, Director of Sprockets, City of Saint Paul, 2/14/12
- Dorothy Freeman, State 4-H Program Leader, 11/1/11
- Cece Gran, Associate Program Leader, Youth Work Institute, 11/2/11
- Maki Kawase & Jessica Russo, Assistant Extension Professor, 4-H Urban Program, 11/7/11
- Pam McBride, Project Director of Youth Development, Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board, 11/8/11
- Deborah Moore, Program Leader, Youth Work Institute, 11/4/11
- Jennifer Skuza, Program Leader, Education Design and Development, 11/7/11
- Rebecca Saito, Senior Research Associate, Extension Center for Youth Development, 11/7/11
- Jerome Stein, Professor, Director of Youth Leadership Development Program, School of Social Work, University of Minnesota, 11/7/11
- Kate Walker, Research Associate, Extension Center for Youth Development, 11/2/11
- Hayley Tompkins, Beacons Coordinator, 11/1/11

Non Case Study (Comparative) Interviews
- Stephen Hamilton, Associate Director for Youth Development, Cornell University, 1/24/12
- Mark Krueger, Professor Youth Work Learning Center, 2/8/12
- Karen VanderVen, Emeritus Professor, University of Pittsburgh, 3/12/12

Classroom Observations
- Michael Baizerman, Professor and Director of Youth Studies, University of Minnesota, 11/2/11
- Mark Krueger, Professor Youth Work Learning Center, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2/8/12
• Ross VeLure Roholt, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, University of Minnesota, 11/8/11
• Katie Johnston-Goodstar, Assistant Professor School of Social Work, University of Minnesota, 2/13/12
• Joyce Walker, Emeritus professor Extension youth development, Walkabout Fellows, 11/4/11

Field Visits

• Afterschool Matters Roundtable, 9/27/11
• Sheridan Beacon visit and discussion with youth workers, 11/1/11
• St. Paul Parks & Rec supervision meeting, 2/15/12
• Boys & Girls Club @ Allen Field Elementary, Milwaukee, 2/7/11
• Holden Youth Center, Milwaukee, 2/7/11

II. Collected Materials

A. “I was raised in this gym:” A preliminary study of youth and staff in St. Paul recreation centers, University of Minnesota Youth Studies seniors, May 2011 (Group A)
B. Minnesota Walkabout Plan and Songlines, Thomas and Walker
C. National Afterschool Matters Minnesota Fellowship Program, Final Report 2010-2011
D. Proposed training model (for St. Paul parks & rec workers), draft, 2/1/0/12 (with notes from meeting, and rubric of ‘youth worker skills and skill levels’)
E. “The only place I feel safe:” University of Minnesota Youth Studies seniors, May 2011 (Group B)
F. Trainers Manual, USDA/Army School-age & Teen Project (excerpts including 4-H Life Skills)
G. Understanding Ages of Youth, training materials for 4-H (from Dorothy Freeman’s collection)
H. Understanding Youth, training materials for 4-H (from Dorothy Freeman’s collection)
I. “Without recreation workers the recreation center is just a building;” student project for freshman seminar, Images of Youth, Fall 2011.
J. Youth Work Institute, 2010-2011, program brochure
K. Syllabi binder