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Research and Positive Practices in Work with Young People

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The Journal of Youth Work: research and positive practices in work with young people

The Journal of Youth Work provides a forum for critical reflection on practice and for the dissemination of research that contributes to the development of youth work and to understanding the conditions in which young people live, rest, work and play. The Journal is concerned with the transfer of knowledge about issues that affect young people and about analysis of the circumstances that enable them to flourish. The Journal provides a forum for academics and practitioners to pose problems, consider policy and practice, and create hopeful multidisciplinary conversations. At its core, the Journal seeks to reverse age-based discrimination, to ensure that young people thrive and are regarded in a positive light by each other and by the rest of society. The Journal is therefore concerned with, for example, education, health, housing and policy fields, including interests in social and cultural capital, social psychology and a variety of other contemporary research and practice matters. Drawing often, but not exclusively from Scottish experience, the Journal is published online three times a year and contains refereed articles, research papers, policy analysis and book reviews. It is addressed to academic specialists, researchers and practitioners in a range of disciplines and to those involved in making policies affecting young people.

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the latest edition of the Journal of Youth Work. I trust that you will find these literary contributions useful to your practice, if you are a youth worker, and hope that all who read these will be challenged and stimulated by the articulated ideas and positions. I appreciate, very much, the time and effort that writers put into producing these articles. I think that this is a very worthwhile endeavour, which is an important feature of professional practice. It is important that both practitioners and academics have the opportunity to reflect both on their practice and on the broader contextual issues that surround, and impact on, their ways of working.

Again, I am delighted to showcase the thinking and deliberations of both experienced and early career writers. In this edition the focus is mainly on “Celtic fringe”, geographically, as the content of the articles are based on Scotland and Ireland but dealing with subjects which have broader international significance in terms of the framing of the educational discourse, faith based youth work and the experience of integration for young asylum seekers.

In the first article Gordon Mackie and Anne Ryan base their article on an analysis of the Scottish Government’s pre-legislative consultation document on the post 16 educational proposals. Mackie and Ryan expose the thinking behind the words and concepts and demonstrate how the discourse is framed and uncritically accepted. They also highlight that such uncritical acceptance is inherently anti democratic and offer an alternative position based on the principles and values of community education practice in its broadest sense. In relation to youth work they suggest alternative ways of working and thinking by drawing on the work of Wallace and Coburn (2011) who suggest ways of working that are critical, reflective and inclusive that has the potential to lead to the required broader thinking and subsequent social change.

Secondly, Allan Clyne tells us about his research-based consultation on Christian work with young people across Scotland. Using the lens of accepted CLD practises, the research sets out to create a clear and accurate image of the Christian faith based practice. His main aim is to gain a deeper insight into this practice and to create an environment of understanding, which could benefit youth work as a whole. He seeks to improve understanding within and outwith the sector and to enhance the possibility of collaboration with other forms of youth work. This area of Christian ‘youth work’ is one where there has been limited research yet it is an area which works with significant numbers of young people. The research is interesting and useful in identifying a range of methodologies and purposes as well as debating the complex nature of youth work practice.

In the final article Vasintha offers an insight into the process of integration for young asylum seekers and refugees. She contextualises her study within the current discourse of globalisation and uncovers relevant social, political cultural and economic aspects to the integration process. She has identified three main themes, which may be useful when working with young asylum seekers in youth work situations. These are; a process of social distancing, the need for a cultural transition to take place and the emergence of a hybrid culture based on adaptation and relearning. A key finding is that most of the young asylum seekers interviewed felt discriminated against not just on a personal level but on a structural level. Vasintha has helped to remind us that “integration like most social processes is subjected to and manifested in ongoing power struggles and often involves a vicious struggle in the form of oppression, discrimination, exploitation and segregation”.

In the book review section, Stewart Ritchie locates the book, ‘Youth Work in Communities and Schools’ by Annette Coburn and David Wallace, within the current educational discourse in Scotland. The book grapples with real life youth work practice issues, for example, identifying different forms of youth work, delineating the problems and possibilities of youth work in schools and helping the reader to think about whether the current educational policy potentially enhances or devalues youth work practice.

Based on these written contributions, the main messages coming through this edition, for me, are that it is appropriate and helpful to open up the social discourse, to research and study the practice and to critically appraise what is, presented by the power brokers. For it is only through highlighting the differences and similarities that we come to a common understanding and create a platform to work together. It is through such courageous endeavours that young people’s circumstances are opened up to expose the hidden and interwoven layers of discrimination. It is only through demonstrating such a commitment to look behind the words, to find ways to overcome the hidden barriers and enhance our thinking, naming and practice, that youth workers become part of the solution rather than part of the problem. In the complex world of youth work practice perhaps the primary concern is not about the action that we take but that what we do is informed rather than unwitting and is openly expressed rather than latent so that it is open to dialogue and debate.

Brian McGinley
Editor

WHAT LIES BENEATH? FRAMING THE PRINCIPLES FOR POST-16 EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND

Gordon Mackie University of Strathclyde and Anne Ryan, University of Strathclyde

Introduction

“Little points interest me”.

So states a character at the cricket match in the Merchant Ivory version of E.M. Forster’s ‘Maurice’. In the Scottish Government version of post-16 education, one point is clear very early on. As far as education goes, it’s ‘The Economy, Stupid’. As Crowther (2012) notes, focusing on the various purposes of education, this ‘narrowness of vision’ has narrower definitional purpose when considering the stated ‘underlying principles’ within the document. ‘Underlying’ is an interesting word. Whilst tailoring metaphors are used regularly in education – ‘best fit’, ‘underpinning’, and ‘bespoke’ being three such examples-, ‘underlying’ does not come from this tradition. It has amongst its definitions, an economic meaning. ‘An underlying may be a price or rate of an asset or liability but is not the asset or liability itself’ (Fischer et al, 2012) i.e. it could refer to the price or cost of education, not to education itself.

Framing

The choice of this word could have simply been a slip of the proverbial pen, or it could offer a valuable insight into how the post-16 educational proposals are ‘framed’. The word ‘frame’ is being utilised here in the way that is used by cognitive psychologist and linguist George Lakoff (1987, 1999). In “Don’t think of an elephant: know your values and frame the debate” (2004) he explains that in asserting your case, it is a mistake even to use the words or concepts of those who assert differently. If you are asked not to think of an elephant, it is most likely that is what you will think about and so the debate would be framed from then on. Frames work in many different ways. For example, the introduction to the post-16 education consultation document cites a previous US president. Although his name is not cited it is used in the document to engender a particular associational bond as a frame. In 2008, Lakoff gave a lecture at Google headquarters in California (www.youtube.com) citing another President, (though only a candidate at the time) Barak Obama. When Obama appeared on a televised debate for the presidency, and as part a panel of candidates, he was asked whether he believed that English should

be the official language of the United States. He stepped up to the podium and argued that the question was intended to be divisive and refused to accept the way the question was being asked. Instead, he spoke about what he thought was important and what was really underpinning the question, namely, immigration; that is re-framing.

It also works the other way round.

If it is your intention that those you are trying to influence, for example, those working in education, accept your beliefs, then using educational language and concepts in any proposal will assist in this endeavour. Using those frames engenders a belief that you fundamentally agree on the basic tenets. In this case, scouring the myriad of responses to the consultation on the Scottish Government website shows that this approach has been overwhelmingly successful. Those in post-16 education have (apparently) broadly accepted the framing of the proposals and have highlighted some special issue of implementation pertinent to their own areas of interest and expertise.

Context

The Scottish Government’s consultation “Putting Learners at the centre: delivering our ambitions for post-16 education” officially closed at the end of 2011. This ‘pre-legislative document’ outlines future expectations by government for those involved in colleges, universities, careers, community learning and development** and other vocational training providers.

** Community learning and development is the phrase currently used to describe the work previously carried out under the auspices of Community education

It is clear that the proposals outlined in the document are designed to achieve the government’s vision of a highly economically competitive Scotland. Proposals such as a guaranteed income level of £7000 for each full-time student in higher education together with further endorsement that tuition fees will not be introduced for university courses, offers confidence to those who are able to access such opportunities. However, there is undoubtedly a focus on a very narrow age range, 16-19 year olds. One of the key proposals is to ensure that each young person between the ages of 16 and 19 has a place in education or training. The preservation of the education maintenance allowance, the creation of work-based apprenticeships and activity agreements can be viewed as having a positive impact on this priority. Whilst there is a commitment in the paper to encourage participation for ‘those further away from the labour market’ Scottish Government, (2011:4) reforms

designed to encourage participation from more mature non-traditional learners are less evident. As Crowther (2011:14) asserts, 'what is not on offer, however, is a broad curriculum beyond the need to find work for a very narrow age range'.

Also within the document, reference is made to Community Learning and Development (CLD), (paragraphs 59+60 plus a few others) which the Scottish Government defines as 'learning and social development work with individuals and groups in their communities using a range of formal and informal methods' (2004). Within this current configuration, 'achievement through learning for young people' is mentioned, which includes youth work. It is government's intention that 'In reforming and refocusing the system, we want to place **more weight** on young people'. Even if this is a mistake or unintended statement, we are concerned that this stated ambition will be realised. Whilst it appears that there is an intention to place young people 'at the centre' of the debate, seemingly speaking to educators regarding 'learner-centredness', there are other consequences to the particular way this concept is being used.

The underlying principles are identified to 'maximise the contribution of each 'sector' and strengthen their interconnectedness. This approach allows for the recognition of the respective distinct characteristics and provides the opportunity to apply a 'common set of expectations for the system as a whole'. (Scottish Government 2011:11).

This article explores these guiding principles from an informal education /youth work perspective. If these proposals include, even marginally, some of the work carried out under the auspices of CLD, then we argue it is valid that these principles are explored from such perspectives. As the CLD configuration also includes 'achievement through learning for adults and 'achievements through building community capacity', perspectives will also be included from these traditions. The way that the document uses various concepts from a wider range of theory, both formal and informal education, we argue that the frame being used is intended to speak to a wide range of professionals and interested parties but at the same time narrow the focus to mirror a political ethos.

OPEN TO ALL: our system should give all those who can benefit the opportunity to do so, removing barriers to access where they exist

Policy development within Scotland has highlighted a disparity between those '*who achieve their full potential and those who do not*' (Scottish Executive 2003:4). To address

this widening disparity the then Scottish Executive identified a vision to create ‘a Scotland where people have the chance to learn, irrespective of their background or current personal circumstances’ (Scottish Executive 2003:5). To facilitate engagement in education and training many of the existing barriers that preclude ‘hard to reach’ learners from engaging in educational opportunities needed to be addressed.

The removal of barriers is therefore viewed as possible and necessary. We need to have an understanding of the nature of such barriers and consider strategies that will successfully remove these. Fortunately, much research has been devoted to exploring barriers and strategies, particularly for those who traditionally do not participate in education and training. (Gallacher et al., 2000; Gorard et al., 2006). However, ‘access for all’ will not be successfully achieved by solely attempting to remove these barriers, which is probably insurmountable task in itself. It is our belief that to ensure social equity much more than this is required. The specific targeting of provision to under-represented groups requires positive action. The term ‘positive action’ is used deliberately to replace the traditionally used term of ‘positive discrimination’. Many forms of positive discrimination now, as a general rule are considered at worst illegal and at best unjust, with the exception of disability discrimination, in particular for employers seeking to recruit a diverse workforce (Gillhooley, 2008). Community learning and development aims to engage in positive action to ensure ‘access for all’ as the practice has since its inception in 1975 as community education (SED, 1975).

To increase our understanding of why some participate and others do not, it is necessary to explore barriers, which, for many, prevents engagement in learning opportunities (McGivney, 1993; Gorard et al., 2006). Barriers have been categorised in different ways but one typology that encompasses the extensive range is ‘situational barriers- those arising from one’s situation at a given point; institutional barriers- those practices and procedures that exclude or discourage adults from participating in organised learning activities; and dispositional barriers- those related to attitudes and self-perceptions about oneself as a learner.’(Cross, 1981:98). McGivney (1993) argues that categorising barriers in this way is unhelpful as it may lead to a superficial understanding of the difficulties faced by learners as it does not acknowledge that barriers are both complex and inextricably linked.

Gallacher et al., (2000) provided insight into barriers that prevented participation in the further education sector, particularly for people who suffered from or who were

at risk of social exclusion. Findings, in relation to barriers, included negative experiences of school. For some participants this negative experience was the result of having failed to succeed at school through, for example, having a learning difficulty or having left school early due to peer pressure. Childcare too was a barrier, particularly for women as the cost of childcare was prohibitive for those on low incomes. Finance was a major barrier in that people on low incomes who were reliant on benefits were unable to participate in learning opportunities, as the benefits system did not support those wishing to undertake full-time study. The decrease in the entitlement to benefits proved to be the biggest barrier of all, *'benefit entitlement has traditionally been incompatible with formal learning episodes'* (Gorard, et al., 2006:52).

St. Clair (2006), investigated the motivations and barriers faced by those wishing to undertake part-time study. In addition to this he identified a range of barriers derived from the 'psychosocial interaction' model (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982). Those identified included a lack of confidence, time constraints, low personal priority and personal and family influences (St. Clair, 2006). He asserts that whilst certain factors can be addressed or removed through policy, there are those that impact hugely on participation such as previous negative educational experience and that these are difficult to influence in this way.

To conclude this section, the literature provides evidence that a range of factors are implicated but the biggest barrier is that of cost, both direct costs such as fees but also those associated with study such as transport and childcare costs. Given this then it would correct to assume that the removal of such costs would increase participation rates from lower income groups. However, Gorard et al., (2006) assert that there is little evidence that financial incentives such as the removal of fees and bursaries alone actually increases participation from the groups for which it was intended but that personal and socio-economic factors need to be considered too. "Culture and structure interact in ways that make it difficult for people living on the margins of society to participate in further education". (Gallacher et al., 2000:36). Further positive action is required and examples of such are identified by them, e.g. FE Colleges have been able to access funding to engage in what could be considered 'positive action' initiatives such as outreach courses in community learning centres, the marketing of opportunities in local community venues, staff development provision and the links with other agencies such as community education, schools and voluntary organisations. However, according to Tett, the 'marketisation' of education and training limits choice further for 'those marginalised by poverty and

geography' (2010:45) and fears that as such the market will do little to remove the barriers that exist to learning.

FLEXIBLE: the post-16 system should offer a wide range of provision in different ways to meet the diverse needs of learners and businesses

The Government's pledge to provide opportunities that are both flexible and learner centred presents a real opportunity to improve access for all. If its commitment 'to a free, inclusive system of providing education for all' (2011:9) is to be realised then what needs to be acknowledged is that traditional patterns of delivery, which have very much been the norm until now, have been, to an extent, an excluding practice.

Flexible modes of delivery that address many of the barriers to learning outlined above, need to be routinely offered by providers and not viewed as having less currency than full time options. Opportunities that provide the possibility to 'earn and learn' concurrently have been successful in engaging hard to reach learners, particularly within professional training. In the past, the then Scottish Executive (2003) intimated their commitment to widening access to professional training. Indeed a review of community education training was commissioned and consequently the policy document 'Empowered to Practice' strengthened the argument that part-time and work based modes needed to be expanded, particularly to meet the commitment to engage hardest to reach learners.

One such example that has been successful in recruiting and retaining this group of learners is the part-time route to the attainment of the BA (Hons.) in Community Education at the University of Strathclyde. The course is underpinned by the values and principles of community learning and development. This course was introduced in 1997 and is aimed at practitioners working in the broad field of community education. It is designed to enable practitioners to obtain a professional qualification and is targeted at those who would normally be unable to undertake full-time study because of existing working commitments and personal circumstances. The ability to study in this way has been particularly successful in meeting the needs of both employers and students. Students have been able to remain in employment whilst acquiring and extending their knowledge and skill base thus enhancing their performance in the workplace.

The success of the course can be attributed to a number of factors, however, a flexible mode of delivery and robust support structures have been key requisites. If

post-16 learning and training opportunities are to be successful in engaging such learners then strategies such as these need to be embedded into programmes.

LEARNER-CENTRED: funding systems and provision should be designed around the needs of learners and should be simple, transparent and accessible

Within the principles that underpin CLD the needs of learners are at the forefront of any learning and development opportunity and much can be learnt from this approach if post-16 education is to be successful in engaging hardest to reach learners.

Within the context of CLD, adopting an ethos of being learner-centred focuses on a number of elements that when brought together have been successful in engaging this group.

Practice is embodied by the following definition by Edwards

Placing learners at the heart of the learning process and meeting their needs, is taken to a progressive step in which learner-centred approaches mean that persons are able to learn what is relevant for them in ways that are appropriate. Waste in human and educational resources is reduced as it suggested learners no longer have to learn what they already know or can do, nor what they are uninterested in. (2001:37)

In developing a curriculum the needs of individuals are of paramount importance, not merely about the needs of employers. In addition to this, addressing barriers and creating conducive learning environments are crucial.

As identified earlier, one of the biggest barriers affecting the ability to participate is finance. For those learners 'furthest away from the labour market' any cost associated with a learning opportunity can prove to be a disincentive. Low-income and the structure of the benefits system prevent such learners from accessing opportunities. Even programmes with an element of financial incentive have had little success in encouraging such learners back into education and training (Gallagher et al., 2000). It is clear that what is being said here is that it is necessary to consider strategies designed to overcome the full range of barriers that exist if increased participation is to be realised.

The learning environment is crucial and provision needs to be delivered in accessible locations, often within neighbourhoods in venues that are welcoming and non-threatening. Creating a conducive learning environment is not just concerned with locating a suitable building. An environment where there is an

atmosphere of: trust and co-operation; where people are not fearful of being judged; where people can be open and feel supported is crucial (Rodgers, 2007).

As mentioned previously, there is no doubt that the principles that underpin this document are designed to facilitate access to the labour market. Whilst stated intentions such as ‘open to all, flexible and learner-centred are optimistic, there is a danger that individuals that are viewed as having little contribution to make to economic growth are forgotten about.

Within the practice of CLD, learning and development opportunities that are both accessible and responsive to individual needs are indeed a given. However, individual needs are not always driven by a single desire to be economically active. There is a risk that post-16 education limits opportunities to secure ‘resources for personal and democratic dimensions’ (Tett, 2010:45). We argue that the complex life circumstances need to be tackled for some individuals before any consideration of entering into the employment market becomes in any way a reality. There needs to be a recognition and “tackling (of) the urgent problems and real concerns of people living in the kind of difficult circumstances that would defeat the most courageous of us’ (Thomson, 2001:11). What this means is that it is not possible to separate the economic situation from the social situation that those ‘furthest away from the employment market’ find themselves in.

DIVERSE: we need to encourage and nurture diversity and encourage institutions and providers to focus on areas where they excel and add most value

In this document the Government have referred to diversity in relation to providers specialising in areas where they most excel and give the example of the University of Strathclyde and its quest to become a leading technological institution. However, within CLD practice, diversity is a much broader concept and would include, promoting equality and inclusion and the need to respect different cultures and values.

The Equality Strategy 2010 (The Home Office, 2010) is a challenge to the unfairness that exists in today’s society. The Westminster Government have expressed a commitment to equal access for all and believe that everyone should have the same life chances. However, anti-discriminatory practice recognises that not everyone has equal access to opportunities (Gast & Patmore, 2012). One of the principles for CLD is ‘Inclusion, equality of opportunity and anti-discrimination –

recognising that some people may need additional support to overcome barriers' (Scottish Executive, 2004). At the heart of CLD practice is the challenging of discrimination and its consequences. CLD aims to offer opportunities that promotes access for diverse groups and seeks to challenge discrimination in provision (CLD Standards Council).

Individuals that experience powerlessness have many challenges and fears to confront particularly discrimination (Weick et al., n.d.). Diverse groups, such as those from minority ethnic communities, or with mental health problems or a disability, experience discrimination and can have feelings of powerlessness and of being unable to participate in democratic processes. Soni (2011:37) argues that 'the use of counter hegemony ...empowers others through an educative process of active participation' and identifies that the practice of youth and community work facilitates this.

Thompson (2011) has developed a 'PCS analysis' to highlight how discrimination and oppression are linked. It also offers a way of analysing society. It highlights the personal, cultural and structural aspects of life as being inextricably linked. One level does not make sense without the other two; these levels cannot be separated. If I assert that I am not a racist, it does not deny the experience of racism for other individuals, and frames it as a personal issue. It is clearly not only a personal issue but linked to other facets of life such as culture. Culture gives us a context of what is valued or the meanings we attach to things but culture does not exist of itself as it is influenced by, for example, economics and politics or the structural level.

In this context, we hold that being uncritical or unquestioning about the structural (macro-economic system) means that the focus on the cultural (post -16 education) and the personal (it is up to the individual to access these opportunities) results in a lack of meaningful change.

Sustainable: a system that makes optimal use of the resources available

The next principle within this document is that post-16 education should be 'sustainable'. 'Sustainable education' is defined here as 'a system that makes optimal use of all the resource available'. (Scottish Government, 2011:12). This suggests that the principle of sustainability is mainly about economic concerns. This would be in line with stated intentions by the Scottish Government, however, 'sustainable education' and 'sustainability' are used differently within CLD practice. They have roots in environmental youth work, global youth work and also in sustainable

(community) development. Definitions from these perspectives give us insights into what is missing in the document for informal educators.

The National Youth Agency publication “Louder than words: Youth work and learning for Sustainable Development’ (2000) covers some of the relevant definitional territory. Amongst these definitions are principles of ‘starting with young people’s experience’, ‘developing a political awareness (environmental youth work), making global connections (development education) and ‘encouraging an understanding of the world as based on western globalisation as opposed to the development of ‘under-developed societies’.

In short, an accountancy or audit perspective on sustainability on the management of resources is not only too narrow, but also politically neo-liberal. Within youth work, sustainability is concerned with a critical and reflective dialogue about the world we live in and questioning the existing power dynamics that shape globalisation. What is proposed in this framing within the document is an unquestioning acceptance that somehow what we do now is ultimately sustainable and therefore there is no need to pose questions and challenges to the existing structures of society.

Within community development practices, sustainability has further meanings and insights to offer. It relates to the long-term ability of community-based organisations to survive and the implications for governance and (federal) structures (Datta, 2005). It also relates to issues of long-term involvement, participation and engagement of people within such organisations. (Scerri, 2010)

Ultimately, many of the debates about sustainability ask fundamental questions about democracy and how we reignite community and civic life as well how we trade in the future and how we use limited resources. (Christie and Warburton, 2001)

From these perspectives, sustainability is about alternatives to the way we do things now, which are viewed as ultimately unsustainable. This suggests the need for government to change its support to community-based organisations to allow greater involvement in democratic processes and build and maintain communities.

Instead of a focus solely on the use of resources, CLD literature implies that there is a need to focus on re-imagining the type of society we want to live in, how we do business, what kind of people we want to be(come) and the values which underpin

our democracy. In a society where citizens become consumers and the views and concerns of tax payers hold sway, sustainability in the long term is about changing how we live our lives and questioning the assumptions which re-express Margaret Thatcher's credo – the TINA principle, which states 'there is no alternative'. The success of the Milton Friedman's (and his guru Friedrich von Hayek's) ideas in dominating global capitalist thinking is not challenged within the document or by those responding to it. The re-framing has been successful.

EXCELLENT: we set the highest ambition for our learners. It follows that the drive for quality and excellence should be core to all we do

'Excellence' is the next guiding principle. At first glance, this seems unproblematic. Why would we not want the best for those involved in post-16 education? This is couched in terms of 'ambition' and a 'drive for quality and excellence'. (Scottish Government, 2011:12) The first thing to say here is that these things are not explicitly described or defined but are presented as inherently good.

There is also a commitment to a system that is 'open to all', as the document states and is therefore committed to 'access' as a principle. A commitment to 'excellence' and 'access' results in an internal tension between the need to valuing everyone but only valuing the best. This tension, we assert, ultimately leads to access becoming squeezed due to an inherent elitism in discourses about 'excellence'. Accepting the 'excellence' frame means that no matter what measures are taken to protect or force institutions to open their doors to everyone as the document suggests, if outcomes are measured in term of exam results or 'excellence' in terms of measurable forms of greatest achievement, then the result devalues the efforts made by many who do the best they can but do not achieve the best qualifications. Reaching potential is individualised and something internal to the learner. Although the document recognises non-certificated learning, it warns that in time of economic hardship, choices have to be made – the economic imperative trumps all other purposes of education, whether they be they social, cultural or personal.

'Excellence' as framed here, is a neo-liberal idea from the business world, which reinterprets structural problems and couches them as individual attributes. Posed as something to aspire to in education, this ignores some key systemic problems, well known to those who work in education, such as socio-economic disadvantage. It reframes the debate altogether. As Gillies (2008:1) points out.

The term ‘underachievement’ is widespread in modern educational discourse, invoked most frequently in relation to a perceived failure to reach ‘potential’ ...and goes on to state that ‘there is a danger of pathologising the low attainer when in fact it may be the system which is failing the learner. Underachievement is most often used to mean low academic attainment and ...this is already better understood in terms of well-known factors such as prior attainment, socioeconomic disadvantage, and systemic biases.

Any negative aspects of the ‘economic imperative,’ such as systemic disadvantage are not discussed within this frame and are therefore not viewed as important or not recognised at all. Ignoring structural problems such as those mentioned above, focuses on the individual. Framing things this way accepts that only the best is worth achieving and in very narrow terms. What this does is create a system that, only values the best, the most achieved in terms of qualifications and devalues those who do not achieve such outcomes. It is inherently divisive.

If this principle was re-framed in ways to reveal its political subjectivity, then it could be argued that what it values are all the systemic advantages of the middle classes, including incomes and assets, housing, health and wellbeing. These advantages allow middle classes children to sustain the best exam results.

So how could this debate be re-framed? What could be valued in education if not excellence? What standards could be upheld if not a mythological one? What ideals could be aspired to? CLD and aspects of educational youth work, adult education and community work practices hold a myriad of possible solutions to such questions.

Developing ideas from the work of Giroux (1994), Coburn and Wallace (2011:16) ‘advocate the best possibilities for educational youth work’ when is practiced in a way that views things from a ‘critical tradition’. From this viewpoint, excellence instead of an abstract individualised notion becomes a frame with five interlinked principles. These principles identify practices that would maximise the educational experience for young people involved in youth work. These include viewing ‘knowledge and facilitation as problematic... concentrates on developing critical and reflective capacities ...listens to young peoples’ views ...and aims to create social change towards more just and inclusive practices’ (ibid).

Tett (2010:51) points out that ‘Education’s role is to make space for collective production of knowledge and insight’ not about the transmission of what is already known (a concern the French educator Jean Piaget often expressed). What makes it

good is not measuring what we already know and doing things the way we have always done them so that we can do more of this better. This requires a more fundamental shift in understanding the purposes of education to include much wider aspects rather than the narrow focus on the State's economic priorities.

INTERNATIONAL: our work should be recognised internationally and the reputation of our institutions – particularly universities, should extend their work abroad, contributing to the promotion of Scotland overseas

'International recognition' as a principle underlies the next ambition. Whilst universities are highlighted in the document to 'extend their work abroad', and extend the 'reputation of our institutions', the document also explains that this principle extends to promoting 'Scotland overseas'. Reframing this, it is essentially a concern with 'markets' and exploiting global opportunities for income. This is linked to a 'key driver' in higher education around 'internationalisation' or seeking out ways of making income on the global stage. Within the CLD frame, international involvement has differently defined purposes. International exchanges in youth work, international conferences in adult and community education/learning and understanding globalisation are viewed as ways of developing greater understanding between nations in order to learn co-operatively. This learning is not individualised and cognitive but about shared learning thought cultural and social exchange. Instead of a one-way system of promoting Scotland, these recognise that our ways of living in this country and other's in theirs, can benefit from shared experiences, not cultural marketing of products on the world stage. Again, the economic status quo in terms of what Klein (2007:448) refers to as 'savage capitalism' of the Friedman variety is not questioned but promoted. It is about further exploitation not co-operation.

WELL-LED: strong, properly governed institutions which are financially stable and who are leading innovation and change across the post-16 landscape must be a key feature of the system

Leadership comes under the spotlight as the final principle. Governance of institutions is at the heart of the concern here in order to lead 'innovation and change across the post-16 landscape'. This does not necessarily imply a focus on a single leader at the head of such organisations in a traditional top-down hierarchy. Indeed, it is a concern about such individuals, which is at the heart of this principle or at least the ones who are outspoken about current government policy and proposals. Far from being about democracy, the State wishes to have a degree of control over independent academic institutions as to how they are run and even if they should exist at all as autonomous independent entities.

Governance has been something, which has concerned youth work and CLD over the past decade or so. It has to do with ideas related to management, control and responsibility. It also has to do with inclusion, de-centralisation and autonomy. It related to power and structures of decision-making.

To conclude, the consultation period for this pre-legislative document is over and it would be safe to assume that this means the legislative framework is being developed therefore the impact of this article on that process is moot. The purpose behind writing it was to highlight the potential for informal educators to widen out discussion about these matters.

Re-framing the principles in this way challenges the underpinning logic of separating out economic matters from social and cultural ones. The narratives used to frame the debate have an uncritical acceptance in terms of current economic thinking.

Informal educators have always aimed to work in ways that question assumptions and make visible that which is hidden. We hope that far from an uncritical acceptance of what we assert, we have opened up a forum for debate and challenge. Those working with young people and adults locate their work in dialogue and conversation as the basis for generating themes and frames. This contribution aims to be part of that dialogical process.

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TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF CHRISTIAN FAITH-BASED WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE: THE METHODOLOGIES AND PURPOSES UNDERPINNING CHRISTIAN WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN SCOTLAND

Allan Clyne

Abstract

This article is the result of a consultation with one hundred and ten practitioners involved in Christian work with young people in Scotland. Using both quantitative and qualitative approaches in the form of questionnaires and interviews, it creates a window onto this area of work undertaken by the Christian Community. Using people's own responses and words, it explores the breadth of purposes, methodologies and approaches found in this field. The findings enable movement beyond the common characterisation and often one-dimensional descriptions of practice that exist which frequently hide the fully textured and nuanced practice found in Christian faith-based (CFB) work. This uncovering aims to avoid these popular stereotypes and creates a more three dimensional, inclusive image: an image enabling workers within the Christian field to define their vocation, while at the same time allowing practitioners from more mainstream youth work to better interpret the work carried out by Churches and Christian organisations which they may encounter.

Introduction

This study was part of wider research (Clyne 2008) that took place against a backdrop of what is generally considered to be an under-researched field (Aitken et al. 2005). While its findings are geographically specific to Scotland, these may be more widely applicable and support reflection for those working with young people further afield. Recognising its limitations from the outset is important, as even within a Scottish context the number of respondents is small when compared to the size of the overall provision. Mallon (2008) estimates that there are 15,000 people working with young people in the Church of Scotland alone. However, while the views of just over one hundred workers cannot be claimed to be conclusive, they can, perhaps, offer an insight into practice.

The evidence generated proved to be of sufficient quality and volume for an inclusive lattice-work of practice to be created. This framework recognises the

complexity of CFB provision and in doing so may enable practitioners in various circumstances to situate their own work, or the practices of others, within its boundaries. This may be particularly helpful to youth workers from non-faith based agencies who may from time to time encounter or even partner Christian organisations in the delivery of youth work. As a piece of writing, it locates itself in a strand of work that seeks to maintain a connection between Christian work, youth work and Informal Education, building on the observations of, amongst others, Ellis (1990), Green (1999) and Pugh (1999). In one sense it aims to explore their ideas, while also permitting a picture to be painted of what occurs in actual practice. To that end, the research adopted a methodology, which would assist in uncovering practice.

Methodology

The methodology used in this research sits broadly within the Empirical Tradition and adopts what Creswell (2003:11) called the “Pragmatist Approach”. Rather than being ideologically fixed, it set out to gain an understanding by utilising both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. These were then triangulated which enabled a detailed account of practice to be formulated.

In the first instance a questionnaire was circulated both on-line and in hard copy. The online survey was emailed out to co-ordinators and managers of those involved in young people’s work in ‘Christian’ agencies and individual ‘Christian’ organisations, with the request that they send it on to practitioners for whom they were responsible. Using this snowballing approach, it was intended to contact as wide a constituent as possible. The paper copy of the questionnaire was made available to all those attending Deep-Impact, The Scottish Christian Youth Work Conference, attended by approximately 300 people. From these circulations, one hundred and ten usable responses were received, seventy-eight on line and thirty-six on paper. After this information was collated, nine guided conversations were then carried out with practitioners from across Scotland; these were used to cross-reference the initial findings with more qualitative data.

Along with feedback regarding their practice, respondents were asked to categorise themselves in a number of ways which might reasonably be expected to impact or influence their responses. Categories such as; Status (if they were voluntary, salaried or students on placement), job title and the amount of hours worked. While the resultant findings could find no significant difference between the responses dependent on either status, job title or hours worked that enabled closer analysis, the job title used by practitioners is significant to our findings particularly in the use of

'Youth Worker'. Across the United Kingdom this title is widely recognised to be a role underpinned by a specific methodology of practice, based around a unique relationship with young people (Davies 2010, Jeffs and Smith 2010, Sercombe 2010, Young 2006) and for that reason the breakdown of this category is included below:

Job Title (n=110)

Title	No
Youth Pastor	6
Youth Minister	4
Youth Worker	45
Youth Leader	24
Youth & Family	3
Other ¹	28

The Structured Interviews were carried out with ten participants, four female and six male², drawn from across Scotland. There were:

- Two Youth Pastors
- Two Church based Youth Workers
- Two Regional Workers
- Three Community-Based Workers
- One Voluntary Sector Youth Worker

Together these interviews with the comprehensive questionnaires enabled a wide-ranging grid to be created, utilising two axes, firstly, that of Methodologies followed by one of Purposes (or Aims). The creation of the first axis is laid out in detail below.

ANALYSES

Methodologies (Approaches)

This axis was created by relating participants' description of young people's involvement in the creation of their programme and relating these to recognised educational approaches. Participants were asked to articulate the approach they adopted to their curriculum development by locating it in one of the following six options:

- We have no agenda, we create space for young people to talk and ask questions
- Young people choose and lead topics
- Young people choose the topics and Youth Workers prepare and deliver sessions
- Youth Workers and young people choose the topics together
- The Youth Workers choose and lead the topics according to the perceived need of the young people
- The Youth Workers deliver sessions set out by the leadership of the organisation

The responses to this are set out in the table below

Participation (n=85)

Methodology of Curricula Development	Responses
We have no agenda, we create space for young people to talk and ask questions	9
Young people choose and lead topics	2
Young people choose the topics and workers prepare and deliver sessions	7
Workers and young people choose the topics together	27
The workers choose and lead the topics according to the perceived need of the young people	36
The workers deliver sessions set out by the leadership of the organisation	4

These eighty-five responses give a clear indication of methodologies of practice found in the CFB work of respondents. These were then translated into three categories, summarised below, which were drawn from recognised educational methodologies, commonly found in the UK

- Informal Education (Jeffs and Smith 2005).
- Curriculum through Praxis (Grundy 1987).
- The Received Perspective of Curriculum (Eggleston 1977)

Informal Education is a methodology which is based around conversation (Jeffs and Smith 2005) and insofar as it pertains to youth work, is underpinned by a commitment to; voluntary participation, inclusion, involvement, experiential learning (Davies 2010, Jeffs and Smith 2010) and philosophical problem-solving (Sercombe 2010, Young 2006).

“Curriculum through Praxis” adopts a more structured approach where the programme is developed by workers and learners together. Grundy (1987:122) highlights its collaborative approach to learning as "...they both have a right and responsibility to negotiate the curriculum together". Dialogue is also a significant aspect of this methodology and Ingram and Harris³ (2001) and Ord (2007) all build on the role of curriculum within Youth Work.

The Received Curriculum, a third approach, is somewhat different. Eggelston (1977:53), states ‘in its fundamentals, [this] perspective is received by the teacher and by his pupils as part of a given order. This methodology is often accompanied by the existing standards and norms of the organisation’ what Hope and Trimmel (2003:19) refer to as the Banking Model in keeping with the well known Freirian notion. Passmore (2004) writes about a similar approach which may be found in churches, where the church either consciously or unconsciously sets the desired outcomes for its Youth Work, with expected codes of behaviour laid out by the church. He suggests that at best this approach may demand a level of debate and questioning and, at its worst, can be viewed as a controlling and indoctrinating mechanism. Whatever, the case, such an approach should be understood to be part of the definition of the Received Perspective highlighted above.

While a noteworthy number of respondents (twenty-five) failed to answer this question, raising other potential questions which this research cannot answer, the eighty five respondents who did, clearly demonstrated the different methodologies at work in practice, and are categorised in the table below.

Methodologies (n=85)

Methodologies	Number
Informal Education	11
Curriculum through Praxis	34
Received Perspective	40

This spectrum of methodologies was evident in contributions discussed by the interviewees:

“The young folk were involved at the beginning and it really kinda grew out of their interests and needs. We didn’t set something up and ask them to come at all. It’s very much the other way round, saying to them if you wanted to make something happen what would it be and how would you go about it... putting it back on to them” (Mary)

In a similar way David spoke of responding to situations where young people came looking for help:

“We have young people that come to us, visit us, so they’re setting the programme because they’re visiting us, they’re maybe coming to ask a question or they’re coming to ask us to do something for them. So in that situation they are the ones doing all the programming...”

He also spoke of his view that any level of engagement from young people should be seen as being important:

“I’m trying to get away from the thinking that it’s about the youth worker doing the programming... to some degree you want them [young people] to be involved in the planning... you also recognise that they are planning and being involved maybe not in a way that is formally done, where you sit down and say will you do this.. It’s the fact that they’re there and playing a role within the programme.”

Sarah spoke of her approach from within a church setting.

“[The young people can have] as much or as little [involvement] as they would like! The minimum amount is that they get asked to review every term. They are also encouraged to take a leadership role when they’re sixteen. When they do that they get jobs to do. I’ll go to them “I want you to prepare the craft for next week” or “prepare the God Slot”... so they do get quite a full on role if they want it”. Through these conversations it became apparent that for some, Informal Education is at the heart of their work, while for others there is a blend between it and Curriculum through Praxis.

Another group of practitioners, Jane, Richard and John all spoke of their practice in terms of programme. *“The programme is developed by the leaders but discussion topics are chosen by the young people”.* (Jane). *“In the Sunday youth group, at the beginning of every term we have... an evening where we just do games and mad stuff but then we’ll have an hour... where we’ll just ask the question “what would you like to do this term?”... Then I say, “what*

issues do you want to tackle?” And that’s a totally blank sheet for them... those two elements then inform what we go on to plan... then as a team of leaders we put together the programme based on what the young people have said. We’ve not had young people in on that element before”. (Richard) “We would come in with a prewritten programme... but then the young people have room within the bones of the structure to push it in whatever way.” (John)

None of the interviewees spoke of using more Formal Educational methodologies in their practice. However, as this research did not carry out any case studies, it was reliant on the workers’ own perception of their practice and their interpretation in light of the questions asked. It is possible that an external observer might reach a different conclusion as to whether an individual’s practice was truly what they thought it to be.

To continue to add to our understanding of the complex nature of work with young people we now look beyond these methodologies and relate them to the values and purposes which underpin a workers’ practice. This formed the second axis of the grid and the research findings are analysed below.

Values and Purposes

Exploring both the values and purposes (or aims) of respondents enabled the core motivation behind a practitioner’s work to be deduced and by examining these elements in unison a greater clarity emerged. However, even with eighty four respondents expressing the purpose of their work and seventy-two talking about their values, analysing these findings was challenging, since the perspectives of the respondents meant it was often impossible to discern a coherent value base or gain a clear enough sense of purpose from a response.

For example, it was impossible to construe a usable meaning from replies such as:

- “God”
- “Heart for God’s work”
- “A Biblical Ministry”

A related difficulty arose from the inability to fully interpret expressions like:

- “Bible-centred”
- “Jesus-focused”

The meanings of these would require further evaluation to fully understand them in light of a set of values. Interestingly, on occasion these phrases can be cryptic

titles, distinguishing one form of Christianity from another. In some instances the use of these terms may infer an air of exclusivity and judgmentalism assuming a superiority of 'Christian' practice on the part of the commentator. However, in spite of the difficulty around identifying any meaningful grouping of CFB values, when they were related to the wider context of a respondent's purposes and approaches, the research framing (Pugh 1999) enabled an informed picture to emerge.

Purposes (Aims)

To assist in framing this research, Pugh's (1999) findings from four case studies into CFB work with young people was used as a template on which to build. This foundational research concluded that there were three broad purposes existing within CFB Youth Work.

- Conversion As Purpose
- A Broader Approach
- Christian Relational care
- She then went on to make the case for a fourth.
- Informal Education Approach

While the first three have proved to be helpful in quantifying the different aims likely to be encountered within Christian practice, her suggestion that Christian Youth Work may require a fourth approach, the "Informal Educational Approach" highlights a weakness in her thesis. This is worthy of a short discussion.

Firstly, the linear nature of her approach may create a sense that Youth Workers operate in silos of practice and that Informal Education is yet another insular approach as opposed to a Learning Methodology that can be used in a variety of situations (Batsleer 2008), even by those whose main purpose is conversion. Secondly, related to this is, however unintentionally, is a bias that CFB work often encounters, that no faith based work can be considered Youth Work because of its predetermined agenda (Green 1999).

Thirdly, in her Informal Educational Approach she suggests that the worker and young person have to re-evaluate some of their core beliefs together, implying a requirement that CFB workers must sacrifice some beliefs and values before it can be adopted. This idea fails to give sufficient recognition to the reality that all individual or organisational practice is derived from a complex matrix of Beliefs, Values, Purpose and Context.

While recognising these difficulties, it should be acknowledged that her endeavour to quantify Christian practice, through her initial three categories, is significant and does go some way towards defining the different approaches encountered in CFB work. Because of this, these categories will be utilised and built on here, as a base on which to develop our understanding of CFB practice. By matching the purposes and values of responses to Pugh’s initial three categories, the second axis of the grid takes shape. When this combination approach to analysing the values and purpose of practitioners was adopted there were fifty-eight usable responses, leaving twenty-seven which could not be interpreted in enough detail. Because of the subjective nature of quantifying these fifty-eight responses into Pugh’s three divisions, two examples are given in the following table. It is hoped these will help highlight the process involved in creating a usable table of Purposes.

Purpose and Values Examples

Example 1			
	Conversion As Purpose	A Broader Way	Christian Relational Care
Youth Work Purpose	1: To tell young people about Jesus 2: To meet the needs of the young people 3: To bring the church, schools and community together 4: To disciple young Christians 5: To support volunteer youth leaders	to improve the quality of life for young people in disadvantaged social and economic circumstances in Scotland, to advance their ongoing education, and which is achieved by the provision of positive activities for the holistic development of their physical, mental and spiritual capacities, within the aegis of a	1: Help Young Adults grow in confidence and self-awareness 2: Encourage the participation of young adults in their local parish 3: Enable young adults to enter into dialogue and affect change in the wider society

	<p>Christian perspective and emphasis in their lives and to enable such young persons to develop into full maturity in the whole of their respective personalities and character and both as individuals and as valued members of society.</p>		
<p>Youth Work Values</p>	<p>1: My living faith in Jesus 2: Bible truths 3: Trust both ways 4: Love for other people 5: Honesty</p>	<p>1: every person is made in the image of GOD i.e. having a spiritual capacity 2: this spirituality is like a flame to be fanned rather than a jug to be filled 3: that GOD is already with each young person 4: that each young person can grow in body, mind and spirit – individually and as a member of community 5: help the young person to learn to look after me when I am too old!! kidding</p>	<p>1: Listening 2: Empowerment 3: Communication 4: Guidance 5: Understanding</p>

<p>Significance of values</p>	<p>Without Jesus, my youth work would be meaningless. I have the Bible to turn to in any situation and for encouragement. Trust, love and honesty is vital between myself and the volunteer youth leaders and between each of us and the people we work with and their parents.</p>		<p>It is important to assist young people on their faith journey and create a safe space to explore and question issues around faith in relation their own lives and the lives others</p>
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<p>Example 2</p>			
	<p>Conversion As Purpose</p>	<p>A Broader Way</p>	<p>Christian Relational Care</p>
<p>Youth Work Purpose</p>	<p>1: To show Jesus to young people in practical ways 2: To help teenagers feel part of something 3: To encourage kids from challenging backgrounds 4: To provide some type of safe place or sanctuary for young people 5: To have fun</p>	<p>1: To empower young people 2: To reach vulnerable young people in the community 3: To provide a safe place for yp to meet. 4: To show God's love to young people 5: Help young people to be interdependent</p>	<p>1: Christian faith 2: reaching young people 3: empowering young people see them reach potential 4: integration into wider community</p>

<p>Youth Work Values</p>	<p>1: That Jesus is the centre and saviour of our lives 2: To respect young people from what ever background 3: To listen to God's Spirit and be guided by it 4: To serve the young people in the School I'm working in & the youth leaders & teachers I work alongside</p>	<p>1: Christian faith 2: reaching young people 3: empowering young people see them reach potential 4: integration into wider community</p>	<p>1: Christian social action 2: Open to all young people – non judgemental and non-discriminatory 3: Youth work as an educational process 4: Needs led</p>
<p>Youth Work Values</p>	<p>Because they should reflect how I work, they should be motivation in all situations, good or bad</p>		

Articulating the feedback in such a manner exemplified above enabled these fifty-eight responses to be categorised according to Pugh's groupings below:

Purposes (Aims) (n=58)

Purposes	Respondents
Conversion as Purpose	27
Broader Perspective	19
Christian Relational Care	12

Having analysed the data and quantified it along two distinctive axis Purposes and Methodologies the final step of this research was to unite these within a usable grid. When this was done a clearer image of CFB practice emerged. This grid is set out below.

Defining CFB practice with young people

The Methodology and Purposes (n=58)

	Conversion as Purpose	A Broader Approach	Christian Relational Care	Totals
Informal Educational Methodology	1	3	4	8
Curriculum through Praxis Methodology	11	7	4	22
Received Perspective Methodology	15	9	4	28
Totals	27	19	12	58

Before reviewing these responses in more detail, it is important to note, that these respondents were a mix of salaried workers and volunteers and their hours of commitment varied from those doing one or two hours a week to those working full-time.

Conversion as Purpose

Out of the twenty-seven respondents whose practice can be defined as Conversion as Purpose, fifteen would fit with the Received Perspective. Six of those would define their job title as Youth Leader, also, four Youth Workers, a Mission Leader, a Homeside Missionary, a Sports Evangelist, a salaried Children and Families Worker and a Youth Pastor. A further five Youth Pastors use a Curriculum through Praxis methodology, and along with two salaried Youth Workers and five volunteer Youth Leaders, all work more than sixteen hours a week. Only two less-hours volunteers would use an Informal Methodology in their practice, one being a Youth Leader, the other a Volunteer Team Leader.

The Broader Perspective

Nine participants in this approach would use a Received Perspective methodology, two Youth Leaders, and a Children's and Youth Worker. Five would describe themselves as Youth Workers. One Youth Pastor also uses the Received Perspective. Seven respondents' use The Curriculum through Praxis methodology; five Youth Workers and a Children and Family's Worker and one Youth Minister. Three respondents could be described as using an Informal Education methodology, one a Pastor, one a Youth Co-ordinator and the other a Youth Worker.

Christian Relational Care

Twelve respondents would use this approach identified as Christian Relational Care. Three of these work within the Received Perspective, one Youth Worker and a Youth and Community Worker and a Young Adult Development Officer would also use this approach. Three Youth Workers would use a Curriculum through Praxis Methodology, along with one Youth and Community Worker. Four respondents in this approach use an Informal Education Methodology, a Support Worker, a "Helper to Youth Worker", one Youth Work and a Team Leader Practitioner.

To further demonstrate the complex relationship between faith and practice we can turn to the interviews with practitioners:

Bill from within a Youth Work setting said: *"Different young people react to different things. For my personal aims, not necessarily convert like with bible bashing and stuff. If I have the options of all the young people I work with becoming Christians that would be my sole aim... a lot of them aren't interested in that. My professional aims are written into my contract, to provide a good quality service and develop the youth work programme".*

While Brian, who works in a church, found himself in the opposite situation: *"I think, I suspect that it is probably to a certain degree a mixture of the second and third options [A Broader Approach and Christian Relational Care. The first one [Conversion as Purpose]... does obviously have a part to play... [However] the second and third would be where we are although there would be, perhaps the opinion either among the young people or perhaps the church that perhaps the first one is the aim of the youth work."*

Along with David they all had at some level a commitment to conversion at the heart of their work. *"I can understand the scale [Conversion As Purpose, A Broader Approach and Christian Relational Care]... but I would say that it is all really, it has to be all, it has to be about relational care but If you do believe that the*

Christian message is true and is for everyone you obviously desire that people might live it themselves... that they would follow this person called Jesus and they would allow him to be the rescuer and leader of their lives. It's all of those things [Conversion as Purpose, Broader Approach Christian Relational Care]."

Similarly, Jane spoke in terms of creating an informal environment for her faith based work that encouraged questioning. She said: *"It is assisting people in developing their understanding of faith and growing in a better understanding of the [mentions a denomination] and giving young people a space in which they feel safe enough to ask the questions they would not otherwise ask".*

Others took what might be termed a more pragmatic or personal standpoint. For example, Richard spoke of the importance of being professional enough to adopt an approach that was honest to his own beliefs, while recognising that different contexts and partnerships require different approaches. *"I think it's both at the same time... because I don't think they happen separately, in my experience. But I do take a different approach with different groups... with [mentions a youth group] my aim for that is to really get alongside of young people and to help build their confidence... I really want them to survive... the aim for that isn't to convert them,"* While, both Sarah and Norma said they adopted the Christian Relational Care Approach because it was a reflection of the kind of people they were.

Most of the interviewees struggled bracketing their practice into Pugh's groupings, highlighting the limits of her definitions. This serves to draw attention to both the breadth of purposes, methodologies and intricacies of the way that these aspects interlink. For example, John, who works in a formal setting, spoke of his commitment to Informal Education: *"To be honest, my job is about empowering young people to make decisions themselves and to not just give them the answers but to empower them to ask questions..."*

While both Mike and Mary talked of how their faith commitment fitted with their Informal Approach: *"I think... if it was just about care for young people in a very secular way with, just about meeting their tangible needs, I think that would have an emptiness to it as well. It would just be a purely social exercise almost... I think that to recognise that spiritual element out of that whole thing is really important for me and...the organisation as a whole. It might not be as important for the young people that we're working with."* (Mike)

“Ultimately we would have a passion to see people/folks realise their potential in all these areas, and that is also spiritual so there would be an evangelistic purpose behind it but it would not be in anyway exclusive or conditional... just as.. in the same way we could work for years with somebody who was really interested in developing music stuff, wanted getting help getting into college, wanted support getting into a job but never wanted to explore the bereavement that they have had from having three abortions. That would be their choice not to explore their emotional physiological potential. In anything it would be the young person’s choice”. (Mary)

As mentioned earlier there is an apparent lack of good quality research into Christian Work with young people in Scotland, and while this research may go some way to address this, it also highlights the need for further investigation. Therefore this exploration should be understood as being a window into CFB work, rather than a definition of it. However, the creation of the two-dimensional grid along with participant’s comments makes a useful contribution to our understanding of CFB practice, as well as highlighting areas for reflection.

Reflections and Conclusions

An initial observation emerging from this research is that important though Pugh’s (1999) work is, in attempting to ground the realities of Christian work with young people in practice of youth work, if we are to gather a more complete understanding, a more nuanced description is required to capture the intricacies of the picture. However this research does support her findings that ‘Christian youth work [is distinct], as it is based on beliefs, which to non-Christians may seem unfounded’. All the respondents are operating within a Christian faith perspective—the ‘reality’ of the Christian faith is important to them at a foundational level and are woven into their practice in intricate complex and diverse ways that are not easy to affiliate with any one methodology of practice. For example, Richard spoke about the centrality of ‘Conversion as Purpose’ in his work, yet when talking about methodology, he highlighted the young people taking a lead role in developing their own programme, the young people freely engaging with the project and creating a programme that they consider meets their needs. This suggest, at least for him Informal Education is not intrinsically in conflict with his practice. However, there were other methodologies and purposes uncovered which require some discussion.

The predominance of the Received Perspective, (approximately half of respondents operate within this paradigm), should receive some attention, in particular, that four

participants who call themselves Youth Workers operate within a Conversion as Purpose/Received Perspective paradigm. A further ten Youth Workers, from across the range of the three Purposes say they operate within the Received Perspective suggesting that for a significant minority, the combination of Conversion as Purpose and the Received Perspective is an acceptable methodology. Whether this combination could be said to fit into an understanding of what youth work as Informal Education is questionable. Sercombe's (2010) analysis of faith-based work would suggest that this is unlikely. Youth work, Sercombe says, 'is not about telling' (Sercombe 2010:33). This suggests that Pugh's (1999) thoughts that some practices are inconstant with a generally accepted definition of youth work are valid. In contrast to these views are Coburn and Wallace's who recently referred to what they term 'Functional youth work' (2011:13) implying that a conformist model of practice has been a consistent theme in many youth work environments.

This raises a related question as to whether the job title within CFB practice carries the meaning that mainstream youth workers might expect it to: a situation, which has potential to add to any confusion regarding practice. That a high proportion of respondents have adopted a Formal Educational approach lends support to Ward's (1996) and Pimlott and Pimlott's (2008) observation that there continues to be an authoritarian approach in much of what passes for CFB work with young people. While this reliance on formal approaches has been challenged in recent years (Brown 2008, Pimlott and Pimlott 2008, Passmore 2004), it is clear from some practitioners that those using informal approaches continue to feel in a minority (Simpson 2008). Although, it is beyond the scope of this article to suggest the level of prominence formal educational approaches have in Christian practice, it may be speculated that CFB work continues at some level to be influenced in a less than positive way by its historic link with the idea of Sunday School (Brierley 2003, Ward 1997); or that there is a lingering residue of the social control found in youth organisations in the early Nineteenth Century (Davies 1999, Rosenthal 1986). Perhaps, that the second most common job title in use by participants in this research, 'Youth Leader' might give a clue. While there could be a number of explanations for this, one might be that due to the large proportion of volunteers operating within the Christian sector there is a slower pace of change, and so just as the older title of 'Youth Leader' remains in use, so too might the older, 'product' focused model (Bunt and Gargrave 1980) (what we have called here 'The Received Perspective') remain in use.

Other possibilities are that philosophically CFB practice understands itself to be more closely related to the clergy (Ward 1997). A number of writers indirectly highlight this possibility when they juxtaposition Christian work with young people against Youth Work (Ashton et al. 2007, James and Smith 2004). Ashton and Moon write

‘Christ does not teach us to support the personal development of young people... The first aim of Christian Youth Work must be to present a young person with the claims of Jesus Christ’ (2007:20).

Whatever the reasons, it requires to be recognised that such an approach may leave CFB work open to the accusation by mainstream peers that its practice is unethical (Brierley 2003, Green 1999, Pugh 1999). The dominance of formal methodologies uncovered by this research may suggest that within CFB practice the movement towards less formal methodologies are still a work in progress. However, it may be that while a CFB youth worker is using an Informal Methodology, their approach is one of Conversion as Purpose. This may sufficiently differentiate their work from mainstream youth work as to suggest that a partnership is not possible. However, this research would suggest that the CFB practitioner maybe entitled to class their practice as youth work according to existing definitions. Considering all that has been said so far, with fifty-one percent (n=58) of workers within the Christian sector adopting the other methodologies Curriculum Through Praxis and Informal Education, practices which are in line with mainstream youth work, there is still a significant possibility of a similarity of practice.

Within mainstream youth work practice Batsleer (2008) draws attention to the breadth of what might legitimately be termed youth work, a view supported by Jeffs & Smith (2005). Youth workers writing from within a mainstream perspective also have a growing awareness of an emerging agenda and lack of focus within the profession (Clyne 2011, Davies 1999, Doyle 2001, Jeffs 1979, Jeffs and Banks 1999, Jeffs and Smith 1999). Accepting this to be the case, mainstream youth work cannot claim a clear definition of its own practice through which to judge. As the matrix shows there are CFB practitioners who have adopted approaches, which are consistent with youth work, which suggests that youth work underpinned by faith is not intrinsically opposed to Informal Education. All youth workers, as human agents will, whether they recognise it or not, have personal philosophy (Smith 2009) which to some extent determines their practice. Jeffs and Smith (2005) suggest that the moral authority of the practitioner plays a significant role in Informal Education. Similarly Kirkwood (1991) writes of the importance of the authority of the

Community Worker. More recently Sercombe (2010) has written of the ethical dimension of youth work. If these writers are correct, then the discussion is not primarily about practitioners having an underpinning and guiding ethical framework, it is about the use of power. This discussion is not unique to CFB practice, the misuse of power is a risk that faces all youth workers not only those who work from a faith perspective.

While some may argue that the approaches and methodologies encountered in CFB youth work will struggle to be inclusive or non-judgemental, for other CFB youth workers, the challenge might be to address being misunderstood by the wider youth work community (Ellis 1990). This research shows that there are a significant minority of CFB practitioners who are committed to the holistic support of young people using Methodologies compatible with youth work in general. As such it confirms there are practitioners who agree with Pugh's (1999) analysis that "if Christianity has nothing to fear from critical thinking and moral reasoning then it has nothing to fear from the application of the informal education approach". Interestingly, Spencer and Neilson's (2006) qualitative research on people coming to faith highlights that for many of their participants their encounter with church was welcoming and non-judgemental.

While this research highlights differences, it also suggests a breadth of practice it, which in some situations could promote compatibility. Perhaps the challenge that is faced by youth workers is not to overcome a faith/non-faith divide. Perhaps the task for youth workers, from whatever background is to endeavour to pursue its unique calling to support young people, through their social, emotional, and spiritual development.

To sum up, this research suggests that there is not necessarily a clear divide between the practice of Mainstream and CFB Youth Work, and that there are areas of commonality, alongside areas of difference. It is hoped that this piece of work has gone some way in 'naming the practice' of CFB workers in an area where little previous information was available. This in itself is a positive step and one on which it is hoped more detailed study can be built. It is also hoped that in this 'naming', the potential for misunderstanding is lessened and opportunities for collaboration are created.

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YOUTH MIGRATION – THE TRAJECTORY OF INTEGRATION OF ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES IN IRELAND

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Abstract

In the current climate of globalisation, migration, a complex multilayered social phenomenon poses many challenges. By the very nature of moving from one's country of origin to the host society, migrants have to negotiate many factors such as social, political, cultural, and economical. This study examined the process of integration within the host country through the narratives of youth asylum seekers and refugees. The trajectory of migration was examined using narratives of participants expounding factors that were critical in either influencing or inhibiting integration. The findings illuminated the prominence of three dominant themes, namely, social distance – the process of 'othering', cultural transition and the evolution of a hybridised culture that characterised the trajectories of migration. The rational outcome of culturalisation characterised the trajectory of integration wherein most participants accepted that some level of adaptation and relearning was necessary. Ultimately, through their negotiated endeavours to integrate with the host society, new socio-cultural codes were developed while retaining primary aspects of their ethnicity, such as dress and food.

KEYWORDS: Asylum seekers, refugees, culturalisation, migration, integration, youth

Introduction

This research is an exploration of the trajectory of integration of youth asylum seekers and refugees in Ireland. Given the amount of publicity, both negative and positive about the increasing presence of migrants in Ireland, the narratives are poignant accounts of migrant youths' experiences providing a lens through which their trajectory of integration is viewed. The increased numbers of migrant youth (from Nigeria) had implications for this emerging vulnerable group in the way that the host society perceived them, making this research valuable in terms of generating new data on the phenomenon of asylum seekers and refugees in Ireland.

In this study the brief exploration of the concept of migration served as the terms of reference for the research. A brief synopsis of political processes aided in locating the phenomenon of migration within the socio-political frame, which provided a

backdrop to understanding participants' experiences. A review of the literature on migration drew on some key elements and insights identified as the framework for this research, viz. the discourse of migration, issues impacting the integration experience such as culture, the process of 'othering' social distance and hybridisation.

Context and Discourse of Youth Migration

Most research studies on migration are typically located in countries like USA, UK and Canada, with scant reference to other countries comprising immigrant populations, such as in Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and Ireland (the context of this research), (Ager & Strang, 2008; Fell, 2004; Gidwani & Sivaramakrishnan, 2003; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2007). Although, no single definition effectively captures the gamut of migration, Cressy's (2006:4) definition is relevant in terms of "...the idea of continuity between the past, the present and the future, along with dispersal, movement, development and change," portraying the transition status of youth between their country of origin and the host country. In addition, the lack of a distinction between asylum seeker and refugee is likely to impact the process of integration. For the purposes of this research the prima facie definition of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) of an asylum seeker is someone who says he or she is a refugee but whose claim is yet to be evaluated and validated and a refugee is any person who:

owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country. (Article 1 of the UNHCR, 1951)

This research, in providing the forum for the voices of migrant young people has adhered to the call reiterated by a UNFPA Report:

Little is known of the full diversity and complexity of young peoples' international migration. Young people remain largely invisible in research, public debates and policy about international migration. (Youth Consultation on Migration and Development, Accessed 25/20/2009)

From the mid nineties up until 2008 Ireland experienced an unprecedented economic growth and boom, such that it was hailed as the era of the "Celtic Tiger" (Fagan, 2003; Fanning & Mutwarasibo, 2007). This economic development spawned many socio-political issues, not least of which was the influx of migrant

labour, refugees, and asylum seekers. By 2006 Ireland's immigrant population constituted more than 11% of its total of 4.5 million people (Central Statistics Office, Ireland 2010). Although the estimation of world refugee population figures for Europe soared from 2 to 15 million from the late 1970s to the mid 1990s (Steiner, 2000), statistics for Ireland's migrant population paled in comparison primarily as a result of it being conceived of as a nation state (Fagan, 2003; McLaughlin, 1999). Such nationalism tended to cultivate resistant attitudes towards the integration of an increasing body of 'non-nationals' (a term coined in response to the increasing number of migrants) consequently proliferating ways of defining 'them' and 'us', alluding to the 'other'.

In the case of Ireland, the restrictive policies were bemoaned as repressive and paradoxical (as Ireland represents one of the earliest diasporic nations) (Fagan, 2003; Fanning, 2002; Fanning & Mutwarasibo, 2007; Garner, 2007; McEnri, 2001, Rutter 2006), relegating migrants to the fringes of the body politic. The endorsement of policies brought into sharp focus the question, of "does cultural heterogeneity enrich a society" (Dowty) or "does it dilute national culture and identity" (Patrick Buchanan, Jean-Marie Le Pen & Jörg Hider in Steiner, 2000: 12). This disjuncture was clarified by Collinson (1993: 15), who stated that "A moral, legal or humanitarian obligation to offer protection to refugees... will, in practice, always be balanced against the political and economic interests and concerns of potential asylum states".

Dimensions of Integration

Drawing on the dominant discourse of migration, the impact of integration may be conceptualised along three major precepts e.g. integration of migrants into the social system, e.g. labour market of the host society (Esser 2003); emergence of certain social structures emitting patterns of social inequality, such as in differences in income or job opportunities; and finally, resistance to diversity or ethnicity. This claim is supported by Bhatia & Ram (2009:141) that non European/non white groups "have not been adequately recognised or understood in many acculturation models". Notions of integration are generally perceived along the lines of acculturation, assimilation, adaptation, marginalisation, and isolation (Berry, 1980; Berry & Sam, 1997; Bhatia & Ram, 2001; Gibson, 2001). A more recent addition, namely, the concept of hybridisation or hybrid identity has earned a place in the discourse of migration by virtue of the fact that it offers an alternative to either assimilation or marginalisation (Berry & Sam, 1997). Hybridity is best understood as encapsulating an oscillation between two (a dominant hegemonic and one's own

ethnicity) seemingly incompatible cultures to recreate by bringing together aspects of each of these. In a less than ideal situation, hybridisation at best supports efforts to integrate by transforming some aspect of the host society's culture by combining it with aspects of their own and vice versa, e.g. dress and food and at worst, epitomises the relinquishment of an integral part of one's constitution. In reality this non-linear trajectory of culturalisation means that asylum seekers and migrants are inclined to preserve their culture while seemingly engaging with certain aspects of the host culture. This sense of loyalty to their own culture (Blackwell, 2005) which often fluctuates between conflicts of acceptance or being an outsider are subtleties that are less understood and more criticised by society. Hybridisation is perceived as a convenient and uncomplicated essentialising of the integration process but when analysed against structural criteria of access to education and economic opportunities they tell a different story. Given the diversities of asylum seekers and refugees integration denotes a contested process when "the immigrant community in question (do) not find its culture represented in the mainstream host culture and they experience the erasure and silencing of their culture by the host culture" (Bhatia & Ram, 2009: 141). In addition, a comfortable social distance is maintained, e.g. interaction in public spaces may be permitted but not continued in the private sphere.

Importantly, integration does not imply the abandonment of one's culture, instead the integration strategy is defined as the ability to maintain "strong ties in their everyday life both with their ethnic group as well as with the dominant group" (Bhatia & Ram, 2009: 141) implying that some level of culturalisation occurs in the process. Culturalisation in this sense transcends the process of biculturalism wherein the gestalt is superimposed to reveal the products and by-products of the socio-cultural environment.

Methodological Considerations

A non probability purposive sample of nine youth comprising five males and four females of Nigerian origin were drawn from a number of sources, e.g. community organisations with the help of community development workers to whom the researcher had access via the supervisors of the agencies. Nigerian youth were selected as Nigeria was regarded as one of the top six countries of origin of asylum seekers in Ireland (Irish Refugee Council, 2007). The period of residency of participants in Ireland varied from two to six years. Written consents were obtained from participants, assuring them that all records of the interviews were strictly confidential. They were informed of their rights, which included confidentiality,

anonymity, and voluntary participation. As all nine participants were between the ages of eighteen and twenty, they were in a position to consent (or not) to participating in the research. The mean age of participants was eighteen. All participants met the set criteria, which was a) of Nigerian nationality; b) spoke English; c) lived in Ireland for more than six months. Interviews lasted approximately an hour to an hour and a half.

The qualitative methodology through narrative face-to-face interviews illuminated participants' interactions and interpretations of their reality as it evolved as a product of their trajectory of the integration process. The analysis of narrative data was interrogated using the thematic analysis approach, a version of content analysis (Gomm, 2004) which permits the exploration of prevalent themes and messages in a text that are difficult to see with casual observation. The interviews were transcribed and coded using the inductive analysis of the dominant themes that emerged from the data (Bryman, 2004). Three dominant interlinking themes, namely, Social Distance, Cultural transitions, and Hybridisation of culture were revealed in the analysis of the discourse.

The validity of this research is supported by Gomm's (2004) claim that the veracity of stories can be checked by socially organised processes, such as social services, which in this case the author was au fait with but at the same time also acknowledged that stories are told in some context which shape what is being said (Peneff, 1990). One of the challenges of the study is the unfolding and interpretation of the storytelling process (Greene & Hogan, 2005) and as researchers we need to be aware of the linguistic and cultural nuances within which the stories are narrated. The potential for generalization of findings of this study may be limited due to the small sample size. The decision in favour of a small sample size was to ensure that the qualitative methodology fulfilled the objective of in-depth data.

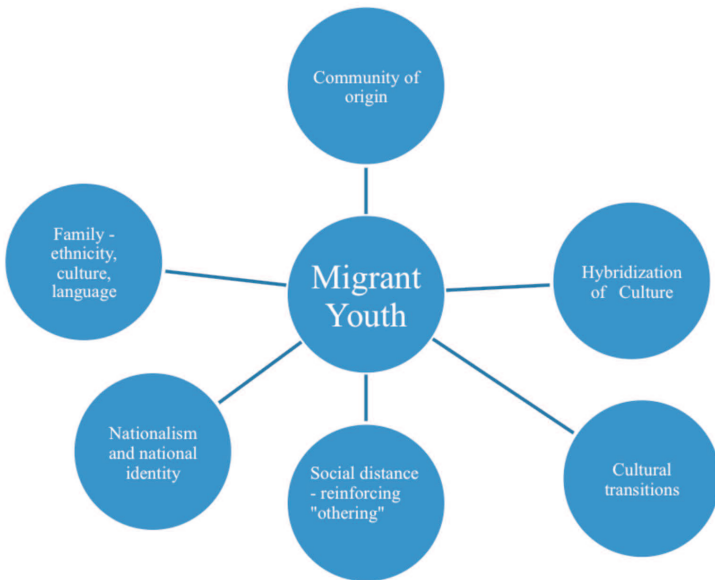
Findings: Trajectories of Youth's Experiences of Migration

The recurring texts of the trajectories of the participants were conceptualised along three major post migration phases, namely; Social Distance: Reinforcing "othering"; Cultural transitions; and Hybridisation of Culture. The simultaneous occupation with two or more themes manifested the cyclical and interdependent nature of the experiences of migrants epitomising the process of culturalisation as integrative endeavours. The circular representation of the themes (illustrated in Figure 1) is also an indication of the progressive and regressive cycles that participants negotiated to move closer to the goal of integration in a new and 'strange' environment. Based

on the theoretical insights the findings facilitated the understanding that while social integration is transitional it is played out, experienced, and impacted upon by the specifics of the socio-cultural and political circumstances ultimately bearing psychological significance. These interacting variables are neither neutral nor uncontroversial in the way that the identities and culture of participants are manifest and negotiated in the process of integrating.

For the purposes of demonstration Figure 1 denotes pre and post migratory experiences, which in reality are blurred and less obvious. Through this representation it is possible to conceptualise the integration process as a pendulum swinging back and forth, but with each swing capitulating between past experiences and present reality. The figure, a demonstration of the coexistence of pre and post migratory experiences reinforces the non-linear trajectory of the socio-political processes of migration. The following analysis of the narratives engages with the fluctuating circumstances demonstrating the linkages between the dominant interlinking themes identified in this study.

Figure 1: Culturalisation of the Trajectory of Migration



Social Distance: Reinforcing “Othering”

Starting with the theme of social distance in which the experience of ‘othering’ was recurrent either through overt and/or subtle responses by the host society, participants elucidated experiences of marginalisation from job seeking initiatives to neighbourhood isolation and public display of discriminatory action. The inability to secure a job and the consequent psychological process associated with the lack of self-affirmation exceeds individualistic dimensions. It is in fact representative of broader structural attempts, which inevitably impact micro-level interactions:

I actually thought with my experience, it shouldn't be much of a difficult thing getting a job... I applied for jobs... but all I was getting was... sorry you are over qualified ...the last straw was when I attended an interview and they said to me they'd prefer a local person.

In a research study undertaken by Ager & Strang (2008), where the conceptions of integration of refugees were explored with the aim of developing a conceptual framework of integration, employment consistently featured as a mitigating factor. Participants' qualifications and experience are often inconsequential in securing a job elucidating the underlying subtext of what and how integration is perceived by the host society. On an individual level, the explanation reiterating this subtext is derived through differentiation e.g. being non-Irish. On the macro level, such outcomes may testify to loyalty to one's country in terms of job reservation for citizens. Matching criteria required for the job was far less important than being an outsider. Hence, despite participants' highly educated status (Muus, in Ager & Strang, 2008:70), they incurred prejudices that acted as filters for minimal interaction opportunities (Cheong, 2006). This purposeful separation of asylum seekers and refugees from mainstream society engenders a powerful sense of ‘other’ obscuring the meaning of work for them. It is not the negativity associated with not being employed that is critical but the paradox in the denial of work, which is identified as central to the integration process and on which several other aspects of the daily lives of participants are dependent.

Ethnicity, dialect, and accents inextricably linked to people's identities and cultures are presumed to be uncomplicated in proliferating pre-determined notions and generalisations about the ‘other’ as in the following:

When you are looking for a job ...you call and they hear your voice and they hear your name...they notice my dialect there would be a drop in their enthusiasm. There was a friend of mine who had two English names, he had applied for a job and when they call him back by phone, and he knew they had changed, sorry, sorry we will get back to you.

While the practice of stereotyping and prejudices cannot be denied in other instances of job searches, the above becomes more pronounced through the status of a migrant. Consequently, names, dialects, accents, and skin colour combined become indefensible for the sense of difference. While, such negative responses made participants more cautious and doubtful about future contacts it raised questions about whether these outcomes remain unchecked despite governmental support for migrants. Further deeper social divisions were evident where the combined attributes of ethnicity heightened feelings of isolation:

I have a neighbour, I moved in a year ago. I say hi to her, she never says hi back...I tried to get to know her, they don't want to...

We just trying to fit in, they are not open to us

I walk down the street and people would shout things at me, ... I can't change the colour of my skin, its not everybody, its just the few...

There is an acute realisation that physical difference perpetuated a more pervasive process of 'othering' as foreignness in Ireland was reinforced if one did not fit the mould of being Irish, which was being 'White and Roman Catholic'. The binary positioning of society into distinct groups imply an inherent danger and conflict (Ager & Strang, 2008), in the way that it marginalised newcomers, especially asylum seekers and refugees:

I keep to myself, except when I see you coming forward then I open up, I don't want to be embarrassed... because we don't really have the same culture... imagine if I talk to you and you don't really interact, I try to keep to myself...

In as much as the participants feel alienated so does the host society through the lack of knowledge and insight about the behaviour and social aspects of migrants. It can be argued that the divide between participants and members of the host society can widen as a result of unfounded perceptions in the form of a perceived threat of rejection in the former and a lack of cultural awareness in the latter.

The stereotypical view of 'race' or skin colour is likely to frame the majority of one's interaction in a culturally exclusive environment, affecting most other experiences, e.g. employment and school (Ager & Strang, 2008) in which connotations of mistrust prevail:

The rate of suspicion here is very high, especially in schools; I even tried to change the school... In the school they would pick up from our appearance, it's because we are black...

Overt expressions of rejection accordingly tantamount racial connotations to which the counter response by participants included willingness to share and learn about the other's culture. Notwithstanding notions of mistrust, one has to agree that such dialogical innovation as the above to transform these pejorative contexts must follow the intense desire to belong and to be accepted as part of the community in its simplest forms, in the above case, the school classroom.

The development of a mutual relationship was perceived by participants to be a dual responsibility of both parties in which integration is a 'two-way street', (participant) and as such:

Integration means communication to me, that both groups are able to understand each other, its all about interaction.

My own little understanding, I feel its like culture, people, colour integrating, thats what I understand... oming together... knowing each culture... knowing what they are like in this place.

These commentaries epitomised the alienated participant. Skin colour and ethnicity can be challenged on the grounds of it being a strength and support for those belonging to the same ethnic group or embedding a sense of belonging as well as a factor in accentuating differences. Even though youth attend common schools learning the same language and knowledge (Hirji, 2009) a sense of alienation can prevail where orientation towards national and ethnic culture is lacking. Typically, the 'us' and 'them' binary pressured participants to assume a greater level of commitment and responsibility for their integration, consequently depicting a greater threshold for cultral diversity. In support of mutual reciprocity the possibility of a shared commitment is more likely to achieve the objectives of integration. In any event, participants not only anticipated but also exhibited preparedness to make the necessary adaptations and cultural transitions to the host community (Baneke in Ager & Strang, 2008). Such enthusiasm may be attributable to the participants' greater need within this new environment, than the members of the host society, to be accepted, recognised and to belong albeit not without culturalisation.

Cultural Transition & Hybridisation

For the purposes of continuity and to demonstrate the interrelatedness of the above themes the discussion is combined. Among the important factors affirming ethnic and cultural identities linguistic skills, tone of voice, accent and other cultural intonations and mannerisms were perceived to be simultaneously alienating on the basis of it being unfamiliar to the host society.

When I first came it was a bit strange. ...The accent was too strong initially it was also high. If I was speaking, you could hear me from the other side of the room, it was very loud. You see people don't shout... if I spoke like this in Nigeria (low tone) people would ask what are you doing?...

Differences between the hegemonic culture (Irish) of the host society and ethnic minority (Nigerian) favour the acculturation process where the latter concedes that changes are necessary for some degree of acceptance into the host society. In Ireland, despite language (English) being a common denominator for the host society as native speakers and participants, as second language speakers its peculiarity in a foreign environment was a recurring subtext compelling acclimatisation. Being able to share a common language between first and second language English speakers, despite accentuating uncertainty, and at times strangeness, e.g. *"If I communicate, I don't know how they feel,"* (one participant) confer some level of familiarity for both parties. Notably, *"being able to speak the main language of the host community is consistently identified as central to the integration process"* (Ager & Strang, 2008:182) which is understandable why it takes precedence in studies on migrants at the expense of broader cultural knowledge equally relevant for integration. Language ability is crucial to accessing services, jobs, and educational opportunities and is therefore an essential tool for integration which is why it is sometimes prioritised by host governments.

The pre-occupation of participants with the need to integrate propels some degree of preparedness on their part to accommodate changes to avoid being misunderstood:

I know I speak English very good but I know at the same time there are different pronunciations and mostly when I talk to people, a lot of them will tell me that I talk very fast and in Ireland no one talks very fast, they could think maybe you are angry... maybe I'm being aggressive... The accent is different so it takes time to understand...

This explicit need to feel integrated as one participant commented, *"If I'm in the midst of Irish citizens, I can't speak my tribal language. You have to integrate and adjust to the*

society." epitomises the transitive function which transcends the primacy of being understood to include ownership for a transformative process.

Adaptations are necessary to eliminate being stigmatised or misunderstood. This precursor explains why participants are prepared to compromise the use of their own language in public for what they deemed was necessary for a favourable outcome. Consequently, persistent failure to acknowledge language as alienating and hostile for the participants implied that for members of the host society variations of tone, accent, and pronunciations constituted imperfections and were ostensibly contested. Emanating from a seemingly unproblematised and somewhat taken for granted notion that participants will need to change to conform underpins their responses, e.g. *"I will consciously pick up things, it could be the dialect, the way I think you understand."* This interpretative analysis of conversations yielded significant insights (Gumperz, 1982) in participants' perceptions of how they were understood, e.g. much to the embarrassment of one participant the clarification and re-examination of the meaning of words was revealed:

I have a friend from Nigeria... she visited the school to see how her child was coping and the teacher said he is very, very, bold. She said thanks because when you tell someone in Nigeria, he is bold, he is doing great, but... in Ireland it means naughty but she didn't know that...

Despite the prevalence of similar experiences in everyday life, its misgivings are more pronounced when they occur in the context of marked cultural and language differences.

Given that personal and social identities are fluid (Valentine 2003) albeit that a cautious approach prevents the abandoning of one's ethnic identity, some degree of cultural transition appears inevitable:

I take part in Irish culture, but still hold on to mine. I try to merge the two, some things I like in this culture I take on. My culture is important to me. It is part of me.

I will unconsciously pick up things; it could be the dialect, the way I think you understand... I could never lose my culture, definitely... I speak my language; I dress in my traditional clothes. I definitely don't eat any of the Irish food.

Fluctuations depicted in Fig 1 characterised participants' need to, in the first instance be fully integrated and in the second maintain their cultural identity. In the above

excerpt a deep sense of retention of ethnic identity as a primordial function is balanced by submitting to selective aspects of the dominant culture. The extent of cultural transformation rejects simplistic notions of assimilating one's culture and lifestyle with that of the host. It is in fact influenced and determined by a sense of loyalty to one's culture, which is not necessarily confined to memories as noted by Blackwell (2005). In this narrative while subtleties such as learning the dialect is more prone to be accommodated than overt practices of eating and dressing, they tend to be accommodated reservedly. This study concurred with Nesdale & Mak's (2000) findings that the measure of success of integration depended on attitudes and acceptance of different ethnicities by the host society. In sharp contrast acculturation was misappropriated for being associated with "Irishness" or the extent to which one can "be fully Irish or completely assimilated":

I eat the local food, speak the local language, learn the local dances... We eat both the Irish and Nigerian food, its part of not forgetting the culture. If you change your language, you cannot change your colour, there's no way that you can be Irish fully. Why? I'm black...

It is clear that stigmatisation is exacerbated when, in addition to, cultural differences, physical difference is prominent. Many research studies expounding on trans-cultural trials and tribulations allude to psychological restructuring and identity consolidation (Ying & Lee, 2006) in the face of tenuous experiences. According to the above participant it is possible to incorporate aspects of the hegemonic culture, but there is a limit to what is realistic and achievable in terms of acculturation. Complete assimilation is nearly impossible because one can never truly belong as long as physical differences dominate. This reality is manifested in the way that participants negotiated the cycle of culturalisation.

Bold statements about the role that the host society and participants needed to play was identified as:

When we are talking about integration, we are talking about the ability of the host society to accept the immigrant group and the ability of the immigrant community to take on board, it's a two way street, it takes two to tango...

To support the proliferation of integrative initiatives, especially as migration is neither ahistorical or an isolated event one participant felt that the Irish should be the teacher rather than the learner and hence more accommodating in their responses to the 'outgroup':

Ireland has always been a country of migration... because history teaches us to learn from others, Ireland was in a very unique position... they... experienced hardship... so I think they were in a very unique position to learn from their own experience?

This new wave of migration locates race and ethnicity in different positions to that of the Irish emigrant in previous centuries. The initial concerns of the participants (and is likely of the host society too) is to find a balance that upholds a sense of value for participants and the host society without threatening the stability of their social interactions. This 'uncertainty' to appreciate their minority group status can hinder the educative process necessary for a culturally diverse context. In such situations new insights about the 'other' are inevitable, gradually giving way to new conceptualisations of integration for both parties. For this to happen there is some loss and some gain. Gains much less talked about in studies of migration include even the minimalist contact that the asylum seeker and refugee makes with the host society, whether this is accessing services, sharing insights about their country of origin or talking to a person on the street.

Discussion

The narratives of the participants revealed that the trajectory of migration was not only variably experienced for different groups but also that the psychological impact was distinct. There is little doubt that most participants harboured feelings of discrimination on the basis of their culture, ethnicity, and skin colour within the wider socio-cultural and political context (Morgan & Veeran, 2007; Veeran 2002; Veeran & Morgan 2009). As most of the accounts related were with members of the host society, schools and in some cases prospective employers, there was some expectation that this would present the least amount of resistance.

Evidently, this study reiterated that a non-linear model was critical in understanding the trajectory of migration. Further it located the culturalisation process of migrants within the larger pre and post migratory worlds. At the social level, culturalisation of the integration processes prominently featured in the narratives of the participants. Culturalisation occurred when participants framed past practices against new experiences wherein these were examined and evaluated for their relevance and meaning within the new socio-cultural environment. The narratives of the participants illuminated integration as continuous and multifarious as well as bordering on marginalisation. Park's (1928:881) "marginal (sic) man" in this sense was evident in the stresses incurred by participants in trying to straddle two cultural worlds by "striving to live in two diverse cultural groups." Notably changing and

replacing old and familiar habits through a selective process of unlearning and relearning were not without difficulty. Most participants in negotiating the socio-political and cultural barriers were tuned into the mannerisms, attitudes, and behaviours by which they were judged by the host society. Collectively they espoused that a dual responsibility by the host society and participants were integral in working towards an integrative goal which was accordingly possible through cultural inclusivity. The reality of the situation however was more complex depicting initial relations between members of the host society and participants as tenuous. Notions of racialised stereotypes were evident from the narratives alluding to the prevalence of prejudices on the part of the host society. While variations existed at the individual and group level the proliferation of prejudice exacerbated the trajectory of suffering. The interpretation to be shared here is that in the face of their attempts to integrate, participants found solace in their own cultural practices and traditions which helped them cope with adversities. Such counter practices in the face of opposition intensified human agency by participants on whom the question of integration was ostensibly focused. In the general sense the rational option led participants to be cognisant of rules regarding communication, language and meaning (what is appropriate in a specific cultural context) bringing them a step closer to understanding cultural idiosyncrasies and thus familiarity with the host society's culture.

Conclusion

This research focused on the interpretations of the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers in relation to their integration into their host country, namely Ireland. Through this study it was evident that the fundamental conceptualisations of integration revealed paradoxes making it difficult to achieve. Participants demonstrated that the process of integration into a new society includes, *inter alia*, learning to cope with new cultural frames, language and communication barriers, stresses surrounding the transition between one's country of origin and the new host society and accessibility to resources and jobs. It can be argued that a cogent argument for a co-ordinated effort necessary in facilitating the integration of refugees and asylum seekers is in Ireland's adherence to the UNHRC (1951). Integration like most social processes is subjected to and manifested in ongoing power struggles and often involves a vicious struggle in the form of oppression, discrimination, exploitation and segregation. Running parallel to this is the recognition that as socio-economic and political barriers protracted the integration efforts of migrants, structural intervention becomes necessary. Evidently, even

though the trajectories of participants were unique in their socio-cultural backgrounds and time and space, commonalities were present in the way their experiences communicated the process of 'othering' for most other migrants. What needs to be recognised here is that although these commentaries reflect personal biographical experiences, they are also framed as "shared in common" with others who have gone through the same processes in Ireland. Notwithstanding being subjected to adverse experiences, the sense of belonging superseded and remained a priority for participants underscoring their integrative initiatives.

In the final analysis, the focus needs to be broadened to include not only language and culture as central to the discourse on migration and integration but also policies and legislation as they constitute the bedrock of the social landscape. The question of integration of refugees and asylum seekers is as much a part of the state's responsibility as it is of civil society, religious and educational institutions, voluntary and private sectors, employers, trade unions and the like. Consequently, an arid approach by state and civil society will proliferate wider misgivings of who refugees and asylum seekers are. Further research on the topic of youth migrants as refugees and asylum seekers will need to be undertaken to explore the various dimensions of this social phenomenon adding to a more comprehensive understanding of the interplay between the political, economic, structural, social and cultural factors. A compelling case can also be made for research focusing on the inclusion of corroboratory data on the views and perceptions of members of the host society on the issue of integration of asylum seekers and refugees to broaden its remit.

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Title: 'Youth Work in Communities and Schools'
Publishers: Dunedin Academic Press
Authors: *Annette Coburn and David Wallace*
Reviewer: Stewart Ritchie, Forth Valley College
ISBN: 978-1-906716-23-3

Anyone working within the field of education and working with young people cannot fail to have noticed the introduction of the Curriculum for Excellence by the Scottish Government. This has led to a degree of anxiety not only within the more formal learning environments of schools and colleges but also the more informal work carried out within the community. The authors of this book have identified a need to explore where youth work stands within the governments current priorities and whether the policies produced by the government provide opportunities for Youth Work or curtail work being carried out.

The 1st chapter of this book introduces Youth Work in Scotland and the history behind it. This chapter is important in setting the scene and is useful in doing that. The most interesting aspect of this chapter is the authors' suggestion that Youth Work is carried out in three loosely coupled strands and the definition they give for of these, Liberal, Functional and Critical. This enables the reader to identify where their projects predominantly sit and also how they cross over into the different strands.

The book continues with the second chapter, which is concerned with the ways in which Youth Work connects with young people and the arguments for and against a curriculum framework within Youth Work. The chapter explores whether a curriculum prevents the worker from working with the individual to meet their needs or if the emphasis is transferred away from the individual and towards the priorities set by those in power.

Chapter 3 look at how Youth Work is currently being provided within schools and colleges and how Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Government, 2008) and Bridging the Gap (YouthLink Scotland and Learning Teaching Scotland, 2009) policies provide opportunities for Youth Work in schools and colleges. It also identifies areas of potential conflict and difficulty that youth workers could face when working within schools and colleges. The authors explore whether true youth work can be practiced within these establishments while still staying true to the values and principles that underpin youth work. This chapter is excellent for

practitioners who are working within schools and colleges as it provides some direction and application at a time of uncertainty within this particular aspect of the Youth Work profession.

The next two chapters of the book look at how Youth Work has the potential to address inequality and also improve the health and well being of young people. Within these chapters there is an exploration of how a Youth Work curriculum and Curriculum for Excellence could cross over and complement each other.

The final chapter brings everything together and proposes that Youth Work does have the flexibility to work within a number of different disciplinary areas and yet still retain the values and principles that make Youth Work so effective and important to young people today.

This book is an excellent read and has been written in such a way that the reader follows it through from start to finish. The authors have written a book that helps the reader look critically at the policies pertaining to Youth Work to develop their own thoughts on the policy changes within the field and how they provide both opportunities and threats to the youth work profession. The use of case studies and examples of current practice throughout the book give the reader real situations to support the ideas contained within. I would definitely recommend this book to anyone working within not only Youth Work but also more formal education and I have already recommended this book to the students I lecture in the HNC Working with Communities course and their comments have also been really positive.

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NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

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- Recognises the centrality of theory and reflective practice to the development of academic and professional understanding.
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- Figures, tables and acknowledgments should be on separate sheets, with their approximate position indicated in the text margin. Illustrations and graphs should be to ‘camera ready’ copy standard. Drawings should be in sharp black on white paper.

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