

# CYC-Online

e-journal of the International Child and Youth Care Network (CYC-Net)



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

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# Voices from Readers

James Freeman

**W**e're excited to celebrate twenty years of publishing *CYC-Online* each and every month. Issue number 1 was released in February of 1999 and was carried along for many years by *CYC-Net* co-founders Brian Gannon and Thom Garfat.

In this special celebration issue, we're starting off with the founders – a new and brief reflection from Thom Garfat and a classic piece from Brian Gannon. You'll also find some unique reflections and classic articles selected by the team behind *CYC-Net*.

A lot has changed across the world over the past twenty years, but *CYC-Online* has remained a consistent resource for those who live with and care for children. Here's some encouragement and reflections we've received from readers this past month.

*Happy Anniversary CYC-Online. Over the last 20 years CYC-Net has provided quality information and resources to CYCs around the world. The electronic format has made easily accessible for all. At work we use it regularly and recommend it to all employees. Most importantly, CYC-Net provides connection to all those in the field. It is always gratifying to hear of the work being done in other parts of the world and to then use it to inform our own practice. I think you had a key role in giving CYCs across the world a*



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sense of community, and really, isn't that what it is all about? – **Jennifer Kettle**

*Children and youth should be at the centre of all we do day by day - whether our roles are connected to direct care or in the creation of best practices for the involvement of youth their care. CYC-Net has elevated these conversations worldwide so we both learn from and challenge each other in contributing to the best present and future we can co-create. – **Theresa Fraser***

*When I was introduced to CYC-Online in 2005 in my second year of college, it quickly became my favorite resource in the field. The one particular hook that stands out for me (and I know for many others) was an article by Lorraine Fox in 2001: The Catastrophe of Compliance. The impact this article had on my practice, and eventually on transforming change within the residential care home I did my placement in, was beyond valuable for both youth and practitioners. From that time on, my introductions to foundational work in daily life events as relational intervention (Thom Garfat and Karen VanderVen), youth work as a dance (Mark Krueger), provincial child advocacy work (Judy Finlay), and recent favorites exploring children's rights and radical youth work (all of issue 235), have been transformative pieces to informing my practice. In 2016, when I took the leap into CYC academia, I was more than thrilled to meet the CYC-Online crew in person at my first international conference held in Vienna, Austria. I quickly learned that my chosen field has a*



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*friendly, close-knit community that embraces colleagues and students as family, across the globe! I instantly felt at home with this new family as I met editors, authors, and academics whom I never imagined I would muster the courage to speak with. I had always held this notion that academic folk were 'superstars', not interested in meeting a 'no-name' practitioner like myself. I was wrong- happily, so very wrong! I also look forward to the future of CYC-Online. As the most accessible journal I have come across in academia, it also serves as a perfect platform for the inclusion of important marginalized voices that too often go unheard. I encourage everyone to circulate, share, and encourage new writers/thinkers to participate in this resource and community. From foundational ideas to new and fresh perspectives, CYC-Online is for everyone. I am proud to be able to refer to this journal as not only an important resource, but a 'place' where I can welcome like-minded voices into my network of colleagues, friends, and, yes, family. – Nancy Marshall*

We're thankful for these notes of encouragement – and for each of you who read *CYC-Online* every month or look to it as a helpful resource in your work. We show up for you each month to support you showing up every day in the lives of children and young people around the world. Thanks for picking up this month's issue and we're looking forward to being around in another twenty years!



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# Install the CYC-Net App now!



# Caring, Love and Mattering

Thom Garfat

**C**are has always been the foundation of our field. But what do we mean by that? Mark Smith, for example, makes a distinction between 'caring for' and 'caring about'. Go look at this simple piece now <https://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/cycol-0609-smith.html> Perhaps you think you know the difference, but maybe you do not. Do you care for kids, or care about them? The field needs both but in direct practice we need people who 'care for' them.

**Love** has always been a central aspect of our field – if you go back to the pioneers you will see that they always talked about love – they did this work because of their love for children. It was foundational. Look it up on CYC-Net.org. Over the past year's 'love' disappeared as we got confused between human, caring love and sexual love. But recently 'love' has made a come-back. People are using the word once again – go to CYC-Net.org and make a search. Or look at this issue of the *Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care* <https://www.celcis.org/knowledge-bank/search-bank/journal/scottish-journal-residential-child-care-vol-15-no-3/> in which love is discussed in the contemporary context.

**Mattering** is a concept relatively new to our field. As Grant Charles says, it involves the questions 'Do you see me? Do you hear me? Do you care for me? (See *Relational Child and Youth Care Practice*, Vol. 27) for a deeper understanding.



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Is there a difference between the three? I think so.

Imagine this . . . You say to a child “I care about you” – or, ‘I love you’.

Who is the subject of this sentence – it is ‘you’, of course – You are the most important person in this sentence.

Now look at the sentence ‘You matter!’. Who is the most important person in this sentence – It is other! Not me as the author, but you as the recipient – YOU matter.

So, as we work our way through this very complex field of CYC, I wonder – as I never have before – what is more important – what is the most powerful statement to a young person? I love you. I care about you. Or you matter.

Just some thoughts for reflection.

**THOM GARFAT** *is the co-founder of CYC-Net and creator of the CYC curriculum the Purposeful Use of Daily Life Events that has trainers around the globe. He can be reached at [thomgarfat@gmail.com](mailto:thomgarfat@gmail.com)*



**CYC-Net Founding Editors, Thom Garfat and Brian Gannon**



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# Using Theory in Practice

**Brian Gannon**

Editor's note

*In this special issue of CYC-Online, we feature a special writing by CYC-Net co-founder Brian Gannon. This selection was featured in issue 52 in May of 2003. The original post may be viewed at <https://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/cycol-0503-theory.html>*

*In this selection, Brian provides guidance on finding practical application from the theoretical training and instruction CYC practitioners experience in their transition from student to direct care.*

Often we sit in a class or read a book and learn something of a particular theory in child care or child development. If we are students we specially try to memorise the theory so that we can do well in our examinations or assessments “and we can easily forget that the theory was not taught for our examinations, but for our practice back home with the youngsters we work with.

It's not always easy to connect what we learn in our studies with the kids back home. What on earth can Freud's theory of the unconscious have to do with Kenny who keeps picking on Pamela? Gail sprawled in her room reading silly picture books doesn't look much like Erickson's adolescent identity-building. When I yelled at the twins for fighting and spilling tomato-sauce on the table cloth, Fritz Redl would hardly have called that a "life-space interview". At least, it certainly wasn't a very good one! Maybe Freud, Erickson and Redl would have been more interested than we think.



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Let's take one of the better known developmental theories, and see how we can more consciously "and profitably "use it in our practice.

## **A theory of moral development**

Kohlberg developed a model of moral development in which (in vastly simplified terms) he proposed three stages:

**Stage 1:** Kids do what we expect of them because grown-ups can make life unpleasant for them if they don't. William, who is four, doesn't really want to leave Daddy's workshop tools alone, but he does because he knows there will be a row, maybe a clip on the ear, if he doesn't. In Kohlberg's first stage of moral development, therefore, youngsters are saying: "I'll do what you want for fear of punishment or whatever unpleasant 'consequence' you apply to my unacceptable behaviour".

**Stage 2:** Kids do what we expect of them because they have come to value grown-ups' positive attention and affection. Sally, who is seven, is going to stop eating so disgustingly and noisily because she can see this turns people off – the very people she needs to accept her and love her. In Kohlberg's stage 2, the youngsters are saying: "I'll do what you ask because I value being in your favour. I want to secure your on-going approval".

**Stage 3:** Kids do what we expect of them because they have come to understand for themselves the basic values of their family and their culture. Carl, who is seventeen, can grasp and respect his community's values around issues like stealing, dishonesty, and violence. In Kohlberg's stage 3, the youngsters are saying: "I'll go along with that because it's also what I have come to want. I am building my own set of values which seem to work for me".



That's the basic theory.

Of course, it doesn't work with all kids the same way at the same times. Some can take a little longer to get through stages 1 to 3; others may get stuck somewhere along the way.

Again, stage 3 may look very different on opposite sides of town: at one end we may crook our little finger while we hold our tea-cup, sip sherry and converse ever so politely; at the other we may be a little rougher, do a little grass and speak more frankly. But we get by in our neighbourhood, and that's what matters. Somehow (although we never even heard of Mr Kohlberg) we got through his stages 1, 2 and 3.

So, what about our young people in the children's home, I hear you asking? Well, there are two ways, at least, in which we can helpfully use this or any developmental model or theory.



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## **Keeping development on track**

Any developmental model is useful as a yardstick by which to measure how children are growing. Height and weight norms are the most obvious examples. Young mothers who are being especially careful about nutrition will often monitor their babies' weight and growth and become anxious if the baby doesn't thrive (or thrives too much!). Other developmental models give us an indication as to what we can roughly expect children to be doing at what ages. Of course, there are individual variations: there may be years between the ages at which children enter puberty, just as there might be feet between their heights at maturity. But a model gives us a guide.

With Kohlberg's model, for example, most youngsters pass from stage 1 to stage 2 by six or seven years of age. By this time they have moved away from a self-centred position and are more able to judge the social and interpersonal consequences of their own behaviour. Just stop and think of that: by this age a child should be saying: "I'll do what you want because I value your approval". Now think of your group of children in the children's program. Have your seven- and eight-year-olds developed this level of social interdependence, where they can moderate their own behaviour in the light of your approval, in the interests of their relationships with other people? It is an important question to ask. Not many children in care easily get to this stage of moral development. Relationships have more often been the cause of hurt and disappointment to them. In their confusion the children have been ambivalent about the significant adults in their lives, often distressed by them and angry at them.

## **Applying theory to practice**

By asking these questions, you begin to build your list of developmental tasks which lie ahead of the children. This takes us directly to the second



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way in which we use theory – and this is a crucial step which we often get wrong when there are so many kids in our face. Here it is –

If Margie doesn't in fact value her relationship with us and she goes on with difficult, self-centred and provocative behaviour, do we

- (a) force her by threats and sanctions to toe the line? Or do we
- (b) recognise that we must try harder from our side with the relationship so that she will get to value it?

This is what makes things so difficult for child and youth care workers: If we choose (a) and stop her wrong behaviour by punishment, we may go on winning the behaviour battle for a while, but we are confirming her place down there on Kohlberg's stage 1.

She will behave to avoid punishment. We are not giving her footholds up to stage 2 – and somehow we owe this not just to Margie but to society. If nothing else, we need to hand on to society someone who climbed up through the three stages, not someone who only behaves through fear of punishment. We choose (a) and we buy ourselves some peace and quiet, but we are putting off a hell of a job for later, or for someone else! In other words, as busy child care workers we can easily be tempted to solve problems by saying "Do this, or else!" Mr Kohlberg says, if we want to be true to child development principles, we have to try harder than that!

Trying out some theories to see if they "fit" our particular situation often shines some light on things we can't understand. Rick is eleven and has pushed us to the limit. He goes on with his stealing and bullying, he abuses the younger children verbally and physically, and is rude and uncooperative with adults. We haven't known how to handle this, and we are hurt by our continuing sense of failure. There are a number of



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diagnostic or evaluative models we can apply, but what does Kohlberg's developmental theory offer? By eleven Rick should be well into stage 2 ("I want to behave because I value our relationship"). We must then ask: "With whom does Rick have a valued relationship? For whom would he modify his behaviour? Who is significant enough to Rick that he wouldn't want to spoil the relationship by his uncouth behaviour?" I wonder what the answer would be!

### **Ever heard of I-messages?**

Often, we adults perversely insist on controlling youngsters when we should be teaching them to control themselves. We forget that when they're nineteen we won't be there to say "Pick that up" or "Don't speak like that". The whole task of child rearing is to get children to get better and better at being adults. We often get on the wrong side of Kohlberg by forcing them down into lower stages of moral development. When we threaten a child, we simply keep him operating at stage 1. We all learned about using "I-messages" instead of "you-messages". The very point of these is to emphasise the effect of children's behaviour on us so that the kids get to see us as people, not controllers. We are taught not to say: "Your room is a pig sty, you are a mess!" Rather we are taught to say "I like to come into your room when it looks so smart. I appreciate a tidy room." We are taught not to say: "You are rude! Don't you dare speak to me like that!" but rather to say "I feel humiliated when you talk to me like that..."

I-messages like this make youngsters aware of the social context and impact of their behaviour and helps them to be responsible for their behaviour within that social context – and they help kids to climb from Kohlberg's stage 1 to stage 2.



## Ever heard of giving choices?

Child and youth care workers will be aware that similar situations arise between stages 2 and 3. Liz, who is eighteen, comes to her housemother: "My relationship with Chris is becoming more and more important to me. Can you give me some advice about contraception?" Here, Liz is beginning to function on stage 3, having made some decisions for herself as a young adult. But her housemother replies:

*"You know how I feel about that sort of thing. You stretch my feelings for you to the limit when you get into that stuff. I'm not sure I'm going to be happy with our relationship if you ..."* The housemother forces Liz back into stage 2 by threatening the relationship. She is not understanding the developmental process.



**Brian Gannon, finalizing another issue of CYC-Online (circa 2008)**



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When Liz was eight, building this relationship was important, but Liz is a big girl now, the nature of the relationship must change.

We all learned about giving youngsters opportunities to make real choices. The point of these is to let them test their wings with regard to their own autonomy and decision-making. We are taught not to say "Wear the green pullover with that skirt" but "What do you think will look good with that?" This helps children take responsibility for their own feelings and tastes, so that progressively more adult decisions can be left to them, based on their own developing values. Giving sensible opportunities for making choices helps kids to climb from Kohlberg's stage 2 to stage 3.

### **Staffing strategies**

The transition from stage 1 to stage 2 with deprived children is particularly difficult, and this is probably where programs fail most. Certainly, it is discouraging to see the number of stage 1 adolescents who pass on down through the welfare system to go on living stage 1 lives. For very seriously disturbed children, the building of relationships requires often going back and rebuilding some very basic foundations, and many writers have suggested that such children need what amounts to a second shot at babyhood in a particularly caring, trustworthy and predictable environment to achieve this. But most children in care can achieve this in a more normative environment.

The building of a relationship, though, is often not what it seems. Many talk about relationship building as if it were a specific task, whereas it is really the byproduct of a number of tasks. Relationship really means "connectedness" or "bonding" and the only way we can achieve this bonding is by doing things together, lots of things over a period of time. Building a relationship means building a store of shared experiences. The children's program is the ideal place where adults and children can make



time and space to do things together, to group and re-group for different purposes, to spend one-on-one time and group time, to do serious things and have fun together. And because this is a children's service and not a holiday camp, we do these things after intelligent and purposeful planning.

At a child and youth program where I was director, we regularly monitored the quality of relationships between each staff member and each youth, using a descriptive scale of 0 to 7. (0 meant no contact at all, 1 meant only routine contact, 2 meant some time regularly spent in a scheduled activity ... to 7 which meant a frequent, mutual and trusting relationship.) This exercise taught us a lot about the "economy" of our human resources: there were some youngsters who, because they were functioning at a high level anyway, many staff related to well, while other youngsters were not getting anything beyond routine relationships. We could afford, therefore, to "detach" some staff from better functioning kids and assign them to others more needy of adult time and attention. A parallel exercise indicated how individual children valued individual staff members, so we were guided in matching adults with children.

## **Conclusion**

How are your kids doing with their moral development? Are you struggling to build those relationships to hoist them up from stage 1 to stage 2? How do you do that? Many child care workers would like to improve that skill! Or are you, by using threats and punishments, yourself keeping them at level 1 functioning?

Are you holding your breath as they make ever more significant decisions in their lives, scrambling up from stage 2 to stage 3? That's scary too, and takes special generosity and courage from child care workers. Or are we placing our preferences and biases above their choices and being conditional in our relationships – thus keeping them at level 2?



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**The early days.  
Brian Gannon, January 1997, just a month prior to the launch of CYC-Net.**

When we think carefully about these things, when we consider how our theory can be integrated in our practice, we are moving away from being just baby-sitters and child minders; we are being more like the child development specialists we ought to be as child and youth care workers.

\* \* \*



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Our colleague Vivien Harber used to say that in the children's program we must help the children to grow through three stages:

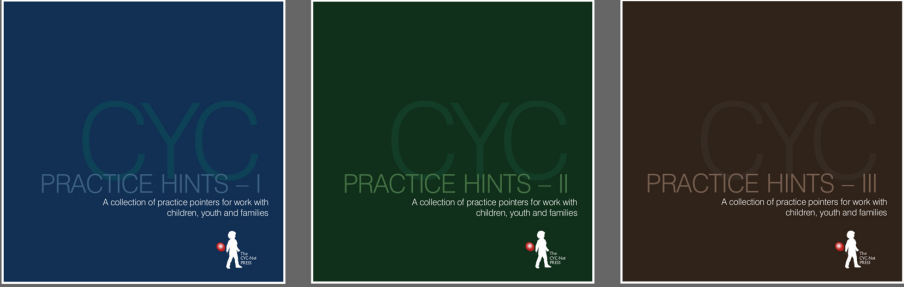
- where they see staff as staff;
- where they see staff as people;
- where they see staff as friends.

I cannot think of a better summary or application of Kohlberg's theory.

**BRIAN GANNON** was co-founder of CYC-Net with Thom Garfat. His 3-set Practice Hints are available at the CYC-Net Press Store below.

AVAILABLE FROM THE CYC-Net PRESS

A collection of pointers written by Brian Gannon for work with children, youth and families



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# Brian Gannon meeting Henry Maier

Martin Stabrey

**M**y most vivid thoughts about *CYC-Online* always include Brian Gannon playing the starring role. Kiaras Gharabaghi's piece later in this issue about meeting Henry Maier reminded me of a story Brian often told.

Back in 1985 when South Africa was probably at its darkest point politically, Brian was invited to deliver a keynote at the first International CYC Conference in Vancouver – not exactly the “done” thing at the time given all the boycotts against the South Africa, but maybe Thom Garfat had a hand in that given that he had recently been to South Africa for the first time to deliver the keynote at the National Association of Child Care Workers biennial conference.

It was Brian's first journey out of South Africa that involved the Child and Youth Care field. I remember him being very excited, and at the same



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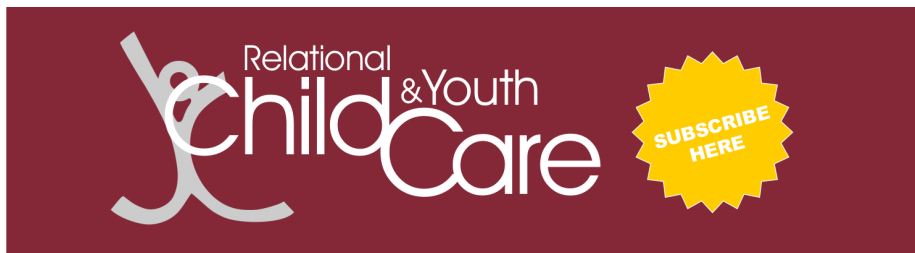
time very nervous of what to expect. After all, he was heading into uncharted territory, both professionally and politically.

But what he was most excited about was that he would finally get to meet Henry Maier, whom he regarded as being just one step below God.

And so, it came to pass at the conference reception that Brian had the opportunity of being introduced to Henry. As they headed toward one another, Henry, with a cup of coffee in his hand, stumbled, sending his drink flying all over the front of Brian, to which Brian responded, “Henry Maier, I’d just like to tell you that I will never wash this shirt”. What a great introduction.

Brian never did wash that shirt. It hung in his cupboard for about thirty-five years until one day, the person who came in once a week to wash and iron inexplicably put it into the washing machine – and then ironed it. It’s the kind of ending I think Henry might have appreciated, I think.

**MARTIN STABREY** *is involved in keeping CYC-Net working as a reliable resource for the world. As the Chief Operating Officer, Martin is involved in every aspect of CYC-Net – the web, fundraising, communications, social media to everyday troubleshooting. Martin grew up in residential care where Brian Gannon cared for him as a boy. Together they were involved in CYC-Net until Brian’s death.*



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# Twenty Years of Connections

Kiaras Gharabaghi

Not infrequently, I re-visit my connections to people I rarely see, some of whom have passed on, and others who I encounter still at conferences and gatherings of the CYC community. *CYC-Online* provides me with immediate access into the past, present and future of child and youth care practice and the people who stand or stood behind that practice. My favourite article ever on *CYC-Online* is one by Henry Maier, from quite some time ago, called 'What to say when first meeting a person each day' (<https://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/cycol-0711-maier.html>). I love this article because 50 years into the development of our profession, and at a time when much of the field was already feverishly plotting issues of professionalization and regulation, Henry, a person with about 70 years experience at that point, felt the need to take us back to the very start. And when I read that article for the first time, I thought 'yes, you are right. We need to work on saying hello!'

I only ever met Henry Maier once, and then only briefly, but I have certainly explored his work in quite some depth. *CYC-Online* was, however, one of the central media for another person who made our field what it is – Mark Krueger. Mark was a friend of mine, someone I exchanged hundreds of emails with and with whom I had many face to face encounters. I loved his writing on *CYC-Online* because it involved the words 'farting', 'breaking things' and Grilled Cheese (I titled one of my articles 'Grilled Cheese' as a



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tribute to Mark). But Mark used *CYC-Online* to open other conversations too. For example, he was the first to write explicitly about peace in our field, and the first to take an explicitly political stand against the war mongering of nations, including his own (<https://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/cycol-0711-krueger.html>). And perhaps unbeknownst to many, Mark also was one of the first in the orthodox CYC community to acknowledge a problem in our field when it comes to issues of race and racism; in 2006 he wrote a very personal essay for *CYC-Online* in which he reflected on his assumptions and his own narrative for the field based on inspiration gained by an article of another *CYC-Online* warrior, Hans Skott-Myhre (<https://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/cycol-0612-krueger.html>).

The issues of race and racism were slow to emerge in *CYC-Online*. I am of course as guilty as anyone, having spent years writing regularly without really engaging these issues. But things are changing and *CYC-Online* is moving with these changes. Over the course of the past three years, under guidance from Thom and the editorial leadership of especially James Freeman, we have seen highly provocative articles challenging the field to tear down the walls of exclusion; articles by Vachon, Batasar-Johnie, and of course the always hard-hitting Skott-Myhre have contributed substantially to this new movement without placing the burden of opening the conversation on race and racism on racialized people, as is so often the case (although Batasar-Johnie does identify, in her words, as Brown - <https://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/jul2017.pdf#page=5>). Still missing is a strong focus on the Indigenous context of child and youth care practice, which not only in Canada, but also in the US, Australia, New Zealand and many countries in Central and South America, the Caribbean and even Norway, is (or ought to be) an essential component of any conversation in our field.



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*CYC-Online* has, over the years featured debates amongst contributors that sometimes generated some hotheadness (is that a word?). I know I have been party to such debates, arguing with my peers (and friends) about professionalization and credentialism, for example. I fondly remember some heated arguments unfolding in the pages of *CYC-Online* about the role of postmodernism in our theoretical basis; that one gave rise to late night phone calls with some of the most highly respected people in the field before finding resolution, as our community always does.

And then there was Cedrick of Toxteth, alter ego of one of the truly sensational voices in our field. Always provocative but wickedly funny, Cedrick took great liberty in his/their articulation of scandal, disaster, and imminent global collapse. Just look at Cedrick's rather classic tirade against pharmacological interventions (<https://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/nov2012.pdf>)! Unrelated to Cedrick, Gerry Fewster gave us the Ten Commandments in CYC, a series of ten articles that break down the fundamentals of our field in ways that served as a worthy precursor to the 25 Characteristics that emerged much later.

Of course, reminiscing in this way about *CYC-Online* lays bare its rather patriarchal character, although I haven't even mentioned Jack yet! In spite of women having contributed to *CYC-Online* in large numbers, the journal had a disproportionately male tone; perhaps something to consider as we move into the future with hopefully a recognition that the field is and ought to be represented first by the voices of women, whose relationships with children, youth and care (and perhaps even with 'and') are the driving force behind a field built on their historically and still today often unpaid labour. We are not a field without a politic, and our politic leaves much to be desired at this stage!

*CYC-Online* has done another thing, however, that would likely not have happened without it. It is here we find stories and narratives from around



the world that have in common a commitment to being with young people where their lives unfold. South Africa, which features (in my opinion) the most developed, sophisticated and innovative child and youth care infrastructure in the world, has become central in our discussions in North America largely through the *CYC-Online* contributions of Zeni Thumbadoo, Alfred Harris, Lesiba Molepo and so many others. *CYC-Online* has featured contributions from I don't know how many countries, but they include Germany, France, Spain, Brazil, Argentina, India, Bangladesh, Russia, Japan, Israel, Palestine and so many others.

For me personally, *CYC-Online* has been a never-ending source of inspiration and connection. It is where I originally discovered Ernie Hilton, one of the most brilliant management-types in the field I know. John Digney, Mark Smith and the man with the coolest name in the field – Max Smart – all part of my community because of *CYC-Online*. Many years ago I came across a piece by James Anglin, which I think was a convocation speech he gave somewhere. It cited his favourite 'pioneers of the field' and inspired me to explore the writings of Korczak and Addams for example. It's also where I see my students appear, both current and past students. What a delight to see them put in writing their refreshing and always thought-provoking ideas. And occasionally (perhaps not enough) it features the voices of young people, such as my friend Inseo Chung (<https://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/apr2017.pdf#page=11>).

It's been an exciting 20 years, with many more to come I hope. *CYC-Online* is where I made connections, personally and in writing, with people from all over my country (Canada) and the world. It is where I sometimes still find my friends I don't get to see much – Carol Stuart, Karen Vanderven, Laura Steckley, Varda Mann-Feder, Lorraine Fox, Heather Modlin and so many others. It's where I am reminded of the dude that lurks behind so



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many things in our field – Thom Garfat. And it's where I have for many years enjoyed the 'Postcards' from Leon Fulcher.

But as I write about *CYC-Online*, I can't help but feel bitter sweet. It invokes in me an image of the man who made all of this possible. A man who sat at his desk in the outskirts of Cape Town for thousands of hours, reading everyone of the articles written for *CYC-Online*, commenting whenever possible, and curating them with love and passion for our field. These first 20 years have been an enormous ride. The ride will continue, but we will miss his presence.



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# Specters of Youth Work: Reflections on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CYC-Online

Hans Skott-Myhre  
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I have been reading Derrida's fascinating text *Specters of Marx* as I was thinking about how I wanted to approach this 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition of *CYC-Online*. Anniversaries are generally celebratory events, but they are also always haunted to some degree by the specters or ghosts of their origins. That is to say, we have inherited a tremendous legacy of thought and reflection in this journal over the past 20 years. A great deal of it has shaped and transformed the field of practice as we know it. We have begun to develop an oeuvre of our own that has defined CYC as its own set of interdisciplinary practices and theories.

But anniversaries and inheritances always come with ghosts or specters of unfinished business. I would argue that this is not a bad thing. When Marx and Engels call out the specter that was haunting Europe and call it communism, they are not suggesting that this ghost is at all negative. In fact, paradoxically, as Derrida points out, they are suggesting that the present is haunted by the future or what will come.

This may sound a little non-sensical. After all, aren't ghosts figures of those who have died and returned to haunt us? The short answer is yes, but some ghosts return to remind of us of unfinished business that can only be resolved in the present in order to bring about a new future. We



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might think of Dicken's Christmas Carol in this sense. The ghosts that haunt Scrooge are not there simply to frighten him or wreak revenge, but to call on him to reflect on events in the past that have implications for his present and his future. In this sense, ghosts or specters can haunt us as an indication of things forgotten, that if remembered and put to use, may have possibilities for the production of a new future.

In his work on Marx, Derrida uses the example of the ghost in Shakespeare's Hamlet. In a profoundly rich and complex reading, he suggests that the ghost in Hamlet appears in order to reshape and redress the inequities of the past, as an avenue to opening a new set of possibilities. With the death of the king comes a necessary haunting, a specter of unfinished business that calls for redress. Derrida relates this to the ostensible death of communism at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He notes that with the fall of the Berlin Wall, communism and marxism are declared dead, but they continue to haunt us as specters of political possibility. To some degree, as we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century, they remain our inheritance.

Derrida reminds us that inheritances are complicated, often complex, and full of unanticipated consequences. Certainly, this has been the history of communism and marxism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, after it was inherited from the writings of Marx and Marxists in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The unanticipated revolutions that took place in Russia, China, Vietnam, Cambodia and Cuba, among others, were unforeseen and full of contradictions and antagonisms that unsettled and undermined them from the earliest days. And yet, despite the history of communism being one of a hundred years of failure, there is still a remainder. There is still something left over that hasn't been fully expended. Derrida argues that this is because inheritances have many facets and capacities that are not fully expressed.



Because, the past is never fully finished in the past, there are ghosts and specters that haunt the present as a infinitude of possible futures.

On this 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *CYC-Online*, I would like to suggest that our anniversary is full of specters and ghosts of possible futures not yet imagined. I would encourage the coming generations to pillage the archives in search of just such ghosts. To explore those articles and columns that have been relegated to the dustbin of history. Those pieces of pieces of writing that may have hidden within them an unexpended capacity to open the field to new futures and new possibilities. I would argue that one such article is a piece by Michael Baizerman from 1999.

In Baizerman's article we find a ghostly presence, that to paraphrase the communist manifesto, might well be a specter haunting Child and Youth Care. This figure, I would suggest is no less than the youth worker. I say this because so little has actually written about who we are. We, as youth workers, have been largely absent from our discussions. There is a great deal written about our field, our professional identities, our practice and our theories, but almost nothing about who we are. Baizerman's piece does a nice job of delineating the unique aspects of our identity as workers.

In revisiting this piece, I would argue that we open a possible definition of ourselves that is becoming ever more ghostly as we engage in CYC as a set of neoliberal imperatives. Such imperatives include an emphasis on a professional identity premised in submitting ourselves to the dictates of risk aversion and standardized practice. We are told to care for ourselves, but with limited or no increased financial support in salaries or benefits. Self-development is relegated to the realm of technical trainings and motivational seminars that emphasize, "being all you can be" as a great employee. The independent, idiosyncratic, rule challenging, verging on anarchic youth worker is slowly being marginalized or eliminated. Such



people may make bad employees, but wonderful CYC workers and they are being ghosted.

Baizerman says we can spot a potential youth worker by the fact that “they twinkle, i.e. they are alive, especially in their eyes, which invite mine.” This is a criterion absent from any HR guidelines I have encountered. I would suggest that it also seldom enters the discussions among hiring panels looking to bring on entry level workers. However, in my experience, Baizerman has this right. It is one of the things that keeps me engaged in this field. I love being able to look across a room of students who want to do this work, and seeing that twinkle and that sense of being profoundly alive and engaged with life. It is tragic to see that twinkle fade in so many workers as they spend time in the field. The mythologies of self-care would infer that this loss of living force is the result of compassion fatigue or exposure to too much trauma. But I would argue, that it is the slow suffocation of institutional imperatives that stifle the dynamic and creative set of relations of young people and workers. It is not engagement with young people and their struggles that diminishes the twinkle and ghosts the alive eyes of the worker. It is what Marx called the alienation we experience when our work belongs to the institution and no longer to us.

In Baizerman’s accounting, potential youth workers are also “intense - you experience them as taut, eager, as if ready to pounce.” I would argue that it is this ontological vitality that is at the heart of relational work. This is the kind of energy you find in young people that is so exciting and yet so anxiety provoking for adults. In some ways, the price for adulthood for many of us, is a gradual lessening of this intensity of intention. This impending sense of the capacity to act is saturated with possibilities and a level of unpredictability that can be worrisome to systems premised on routine and discipline. For those of us administrators with a bureaucratic bent, we prefer our job candidates to be moderate, regulated, polite and



well mannered. Too much intensity makes us nervous. Intense people don't necessarily make "good team members" and as Baizerman points out they bring a certain level of risk to increasingly risk aversive agencies and organizations.

The "playfulness of twinkling joined to their personal intensity can however result in 'boundary troubles'," Baizerman tells us. It can result in what he terms, an inappropriate use of the self that blurs the boundaries between the worker and the young person. He notes this can result in actions, such as taking young people home, fighting with the agency on behalf of the young person, or staying on after your shift has ended. Intriguingly, he refers to this as "a misdirected sense of personal courage." He suggest such actions are courageous, because of the possible negative implications for the worker, when simply doing what seems to be the right thing.

This framing of these "negative" actions as courageous is markedly outside our current understandings and practices driven by human resources and risk management consultants. As a supervisor, to understand these actions as misguided courage opens avenues of what Phelan calls relational and developmental supervision, rather than managerial relations of discipline and control. Baizerman suggests, that it is our own adolescence that drives us to action and is a source of our own personal courage, however misplaced. This referencing of the connection between our own histories and our work, stands the possibility of engaging supervision as a reflective practice. Such practice includes relational opportunities through which the worker and supervisor can work together to open avenues of re-directed courage that may well have implications not just for the worker, but for the agency as well.

At the core of youth work, Baizerman argues, is a joyful affirmation of the best of youth as a time of intensity and twinkle. He tells us that youth



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workers are hard to walk away from, because this joyful affirmation of life is an open invitation. Youth work is an opportunity to meet “in a deep sense” and to “play without frivolity.” The idea that play is profoundly meaningful and indeed necessary flies in the face of our increasingly production and outcome oriented field. Can we seriously propose that we can have evidenced based “play?” What in the world would that look like. How would we find play that is transferable, generalizable, and data driven? Such play would not, in any way, reflect the depth and value that Baizerman is indicating here. Instead, he tells us that, “A youthworker is not afraid to say,

Come, let's play!" Youthworkers play, and in so doing, do youthwork. Herein is found their twinkle, their joy, their bounciness and their focused intensity; youthworkers don't walk away from a game!"

Play, in this sense, is always unique in its contingent relationality. It has depth and seriousness in its ontological capacities for transformation. Programs and agencies that begin the process of turning play into a measurable outcome slowly kill what makes CYC a worthwhile and a life affirming field in which to work. The good news is the specter of play is difficult, if not impossible to banish, It haunts us from the edges in every encounter between young people and workers.

It is in the spirit of the playful connection between our common lived experience as young people (no matter how adult we are deluded into thinking we are) that Baizerman states that “Anyone can be a youth worker.” He goes on to say that our field is “not a profession or a discipline.” Instead, it is a way of situating ourselves in relation to young people. He tells us that our work is a craft not a technique, a way of giving and seeing. He reminds us that we are not psychology or social work, but a field of relational potential, “a way of living out caring.”



These recognitions of our field of endeavor as unique within the “helping” professions is regrettably fading as we enter the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. When I go on our list serves or open the websites for our professional organizations, I see multiple inquiries about how to manage young people, how to gain better control, what diagnosis fits, and how to come up with activities that will “work.” On the other hand, I am encouraged to see movements towards including multiculturalism and social justice in our work. However, even in our tendencies towards justice I don’t see the ontological and phenomenological calls that would require the elements of self- reflection and material engagement that Baizerman is suggesting as central to what we do. In a way, we may well have forgotten that social justice is not a set of abstractions, but a day to day set of material struggles that take place, not as set of proclamations, but as lived experience between us on the ground. Ironically, it may be us in a very real sense that are being ghosted from our work, even in our calls for justice and equity.

Finally, Baizerman makes a rather startling assertion. He proposes our work as an aesthetic, not a set of predictable acts. An aesthetic is a way of understanding the world premised in an appreciation of beauty. It is a way of seeing what we do as art. In this, we would not be technicians, but artists seeking to discover the beauty of living relations. To work like this, he says, is to discover the ways in which young people and workers might find ways for “extending and living [their] freedom.”

At the moment of this 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue, I want to call on us, to revisit the CYC-online archives for what Foucault calls subjugated knowledges. Subjugated knowledges are those ways of knowing and understanding the world that are pushed aside by the dominant regimes of truth in any given age. They are often alternative ways to live and think that often offer new and innovative ways of constructing ourselves and the



world in which we live. While these writings are chronologically old, they are also new, but neglected. Foucault says we can find them in the dusty backrooms of libraries. Or, in our case, in the 20 years of archived material that we can find in cyc-online. These specters of who we have understood ourselves to be, haunt us with ghostly capacities for who we might become. Congratulations on our 20 year anniversary! Here is to remaining deeply haunted! May we open ourselves to the dynamism of the specters haunting our field.

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# How can you recognise a youth worker?

Mike Baizerman

Editor's Note

*In the previous article, Hans Skott-Myhre referenced the following selection from the CYC-Net archive. Below is the entire selection from Mike Baizerman titled "How can you recognise a youth worker?" from issue 11 of CYC-Online in 1999. The original post may be viewed at <https://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/cycol-1299-youthworker.html>*

*Our favorite line is, perhaps, the statement that "a youth worker is hard to walk away from because of her intensity coupled with her twinkle and her invitation to meet, in a deep sense" and that "youth work is not a profession or discipline as much as it is a way of orientating to youth". Even more, our work is ... a way of being with another, not an attempt to change her. Youth work exists in the now, the world of 'is', while it stretches to the world of possibilities. Creating possibilities through choice and action result in difference. The person is a different person; we did not change her. She simply made herself.*

*We're thankful for Hans pulling this important selection from the archive for the special issue on this 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.*



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begin this personal view of youthwork with an equally personal view of a youth worker. This is my list of clues for finding actual or potential youth workers.

They twinkle, i.e. they are alive, especially in their eyes, which invite mine. Related directly, youth workers are:

- Intense – you experience them as taut, eager, as if ready to pounce. The playfulness of twinkling joined to their personal intensity can however result in "boundary troubles".
- Boundary troubles is that state of being in which the self is not "used appropriately" vis "vis the youth. It is when the worker blurs the distinction between self and youth and acts "unprofessionally", e.g. takes a kid home, fights with an agency on behalf of a kid, or doesn't go home right after her shift. Such troubles often result from a misdirected sense of personal courage.
- Personal courage in youth workers is often expressed as a challenge to the youth-serving agency or system. It is seen as courageous because of the possible consequences for the worker. Often, it is simply doing what seems right to do. Many interpret courageous acts as a living out of the worker's biography, her adolescence, in a less than healthy way.
- The youth worker's own adolescence is a source of courage in action. Youth workers are people who live out their adolescence in a more or less healthy way, building on the joy and competence they experienced. This grounding in health is a root source of why it is hard to walk away from a youth worker.
- A youth worker is hard to walk away from because of her intensity coupled with her twinkle and her invitation to meet, in a deep



sense. There is playfulness without frivolity in the moment, it is hard to walk away, Yet ...

- A youth worker is not afraid to say, "Come, let's play!" Youth workers play, and in so doing, do youth work. Herein is found their twinkle, their joy, their bounciness and their focused intensity; youth workers don't walk away from a game!

Taken together, these are the clues I use to recognise a youth worker in a room of people who work with youth.

In a more formal way, the following constitute one way of understanding what it means to be a youth worker:

Anyone can be a youth worker. Youth work is not a profession or discipline as much as it is a way of orientating to youth. It is a way of seeing and acting, as potential rather than biography and troubles. Youth work is not social work or psychology with youth. At best it is a way of seeing a way of giving. At most it is a craft, while it is never simply technique.

- A way of living out caring, i.e. a fundamental way of being a person. Caring is fundamental to being a person. "Working with" someone is caring-in-action. Activated in the act of caring is the



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responsibility for self and for another. Life as youth work is simply the search for alternative ways of living out your caring.

- A way of being with another, not an attempt to change her. Youth work exists in the now, the world of "is", while it stretches to the world of possibilities. Creating possibilities through choice and action result in difference. The person is a different person; we did not change her. She simply made herself. Cause is less important than consequence. Could and maybe are crucial. A focus on health, normalcy and the person in the world. The person as-is and as possibility are the foci of this view, not her trouble, problems or the isolated individual. The imbedded youth in her network of others is the centre: she alone and she in her bunch of grapes. Foci are on everyday life, the ordinary and the taken-for-granted. The existential and the developmental are grounded to the unique person and the single and singular moment.
- The key words: Presence, Availability, Possibility, Emergence and Hope. Youth work is a group of metaphors, not a set of techniques. There are also aphorisms: "Teach her to teach you how to help her", "Watch the person watching you watch him". The theological ideas are metaphoric in youthwork. Be there in a way which allows accessibility to you; see what could become. Allow or create a moment, and believe that the could will be a new is. In the linear sense of time, lean forward into the possible rather than backward into biography.
- Person-in-context. The moment matters in its personal and social shapes and meanings. A person cannot be understood out of context; he can only be explained. Youth work is based on understanding the person in the moment, in the everyday context of ordinary living.



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- Youth work is jazz, not ballet. In ballet, one practices so as to do it right, while in jazz one practices in order to do for the first time. Jazz is emergent and almost always new, a birth, for the first time, unique. Each is a different aesthetic. Youth work is an aesthetic, not a set of cookbooks. It is an aesthetic that allows one to see the doughnut by looking first at the missing part, the hole, then at the ring and then at the whole, the relationship: to hear what was not said (the hole) and to see what did not happen (the hole).

These two sets of notes introduce a personal vision of youth work and the youth worker. Both can be grounded in a conception of youth work as a form of education. Education: facilitating the process by which an individual penetrates his taken-for-granted reality and, by so doing, comes to understand how reality for him is constructed. Thus, are extended the possibilities of finding moments of/for choice, and, in this, for extending and living his freedom.

Thus youth work: creating the opportunities for a youth to choose more often about more things in his everyday life and in this way more thoroughly construct himself.



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# Meaningfulness as a Practical Strategy

Doug Magnuson

Jerry Beker was known for the phrase, “Hear it Deep,” and Thom Garfat wrote about AS IF, a way of helping practitioners pay attention. In recent years many of our Canadian colleagues have also written about presence, noticing, and dialogical relationships. These authors intend these prescriptions to apply to our practices and to our interpretations of practice.

We might ask, “Hear what deep?” It is not common for the message or “voice” to be audible, deep or not. The day-to-day stream of events, activities, expectations, demands, and routines do not always organize themselves into meaningful patterns. Listening deeply without a pattern is cacophony. A solution in practice – and in research/evaluation – is to organize information into patterns and think about its meaning. Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995) describe the difference in mindset that is necessary:

‘At first, I wanted [it] to emerge through the notes in the sense that it had its own story, and I was supposed to tell its story. But I had to make the shift from just wanting to talk about what was in the notes to making something solid out of them — my ideas, instead of thinking that it’s hidden somewhere in the notes.’ Rather than simply tracing out what the data tell, the fieldworker renders the data meaningful. Analysis is less a matter of something emerging from the data, of simply finding what is there; it is more fundamentally a process of creating what is there by



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constantly thinking about the import of previously recorded events and meanings' (p. 168).

That organization and interpretation require strategies: We need a toolkit. Fortunately, we have some help from experts (Emerson, et al, 1995; Miles, et al, 2014; Taylor & Bogdon, 1998).

1. Cluster. We cluster information into “roles, rules, relationships, routines, and rituals.” We group things together and then think about whether those groupings are sensible or, at least, interesting. Alienation from formal education by street-involved youth is as much a contributor to becoming homeless or street-involved as are problems with their families.
2. Counting. How often—or how rarely—does something occur? Some street-involved youth have frequent contact with at least one guardian, and there is meaningful variation.
3. Comparisons and Contrasts. Literally, how is this information like or unlike other information? Youth who are street-involved use substances, but how does their use compare to a similar sample of non-street-involved youth who use substances?
4. Elevating words and ideas to the status of literary devices such as metaphors, tropes, synecdoche, similies, and analogies, and then asking what these devices add to our interpretation. For many youth leaving home is a kind of *bildungsroman*, their own tale of becoming adult. A suicide survivor uses the phrase, *the beginning of the end*.
5. Partitioning variables. Instead of combining things, sometimes we want to separate things, like dividing consequences into those that are “short-term” and “long-term.”
6. Elevating particulars into the general. For this we ask, “Is this idea a larger principle of which this case is an example or exemplar? Leaving



home and mainstream expectations was for one boy a rebellion against the capitalist education system.

7. Factoring. A variation on compare and contrast. In factoring we carefully consider “Which of these things is like or not like the other?”
8. Noting relations between variables. We might be interested whether variables are higher or lower, faster, or slower, causes or effects, increasing or decreasing, correlated positively or negatively, independent or dependent, random or organized.
9. Identifying intervening variables. When two variables are related to each other, sometimes there is a third variable that helps explain—or at least provides context—for that relationship. Two street-involved youth described their commitment to each other and commitment to a more stable life. These are connected. At the same time, because they were 19, they were now eligible for adult social welfare benefits.
10. Building a chain of evidence. We ask ourselves, “If this is true what else has to be true, and is there evidence for this in my data and experience?” Cecilia Benoit and Mikael Jansson, colleagues, for several years have been doing this with reports from sex workers about the benefits and perks of their work, thinking about the policy implications.
11. Look for conversation topics, vocabulary, recurring activities, meanings, feelings, folk sayings, and proverbs.
12. Construct typologies. In one study Taylor created a typology of the ways that staff classified residents, like “hyperactives, fighters, spastics, pukers, runaways, pests, dining room boys, working boys, and pets.” He also used a more abstract typology of “control measures,” the ways that staff tried to control boy’s behavior.



13. Discount the data. This is a note of skepticism. What could be wrong with our data? Did the conditions under which it was experienced or collected affect our interpretation?

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# Changing Lens: Becoming and Unbecoming and Becoming a CYC

Rick Kelly

*"It is not that something different is seen, but that one sees differently."*

– Carl Jung

I thought that I could conduct a 20-year time retrospective, or so, to capture my own evolution. I have 40 plus years to draw on for reflections.

My first 20 years (mid 1970s to 1990) I saw myself highly focused on the various clinical practices and perspectives that I was able to glean from excellent Child and Youth Care mentors and child and adolescent psychiatrists. This took me on journey through various family therapy models, training as a play therapist and a deep dive into the world of Milton Erickson and various thinkers focused on borderline and ego-based frameworks. As we know this was and is a highly individualized and “psychiatrized” way of looking at children and youth. It lacked a deep contextualizing of individual children and youth or cultural understanding. It was also apolitical as I was introduced to it.

In the early 90’s that all took a sharp turn. I began a position as a project manager for one site in a provincially based, 25-year longitudinal policy demonstration project (Better Beginnings, Better Futures). The focus was



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to investigate and demonstrate the cost benefits of early intervention, prevention and health promotion using a community-based approach. The site I managed was located in a community that was variously labeled high-risk, urban improvement area or inner city. This was in Rexdale in the north west sector of Toronto. The community had over 40 different language groups in the school population. It was a microcosm of what the larger Toronto would become.

I had been given the privilege and opportunity and responsibility to do things that I had little training or experience in, especially community development. However, I was bolstered with the idea (and naivete) that had been imparted to me by one of my early mentors in College. He said that as a Child and Youth Care practitioner (then called Child Care Workers) I had in my toolkit, the ability to go anywhere and build whatever was needed, so long as I listened very closely to what others needed. I had worked previously in the homes of families as part of a children's mental health program as a way of preventing admission to residential care. I had some sense of what I called "programs without walls" where my work took me out of the safety and constraints of an institution.

As the manager of this program site in Highfield, I focused the energy of the project, the staff, partners and extensive roster of volunteers (over 100) to three areas: 1) children at the centre, 2) grassroots leadership, and 3) politics. It was the latter focus that came quickly and sharply into focus. The project was being implemented through three different regimes of provincial governments (Liberal Party of Canada, New Democratic Party and the Conservative Party of Canada). The Conservative Party of Canada predominated for the life of the project and implemented major changes throughout that province.

This led to the subsequent amalgamation of the school boards in Toronto from six into one and a similar process for the newly formed City of



Toronto, of six cities into one megacity. It was also a renewed era of cuts to services, crackdown on social assistance recipients and austerity in general. Events took on a very political turn, especially for children, families and communities who were had much less of the privileges and advantages of other school communities around the city.

It was now that I stopped seeing myself as a Child and Youth Care practitioner! I did not see any form of voice in the chambers of Child and Youth Care practitioners at that time that were speaking out about the politics and economics of care and voice for the people of these communities.

The project, with core agency partners, who were not frightened of fiscal repercussions, sponsored a host of advocacy efforts towards all three levels of government. Key spokespersons were community residents, elder, parents, youth, children and in one case a crying baby who went to a deputation to Toronto City Hall. And I wore a Zorro costume to emphasise the 'A to Z's of economic cuts to communities and families. In concert with various coalitions, we conducted voter education workshops including a 'kid's vote' model, workshops on economic literacy and created a local newspaper titled the 'Rexdale News'. (I still have copies and it was better than the high school paper I was part of.)

I was involved with other larger early intervention coalitions such as Brighter Futures and various 'healthy baby' initiatives including a pre-natal nutrition program. My Child and Youth Care practitioner journey was taking interesting turns. The other significant sea change for myself involved participating in the development of the Rexdale Community Health Centre from a mall office to an actual building and in my role as the chair of the program committee.

All of these experiences combined to change my "lens" on my work. My focus turned towards the systemics issues of poverty and the racialization



of poverty and the racialization of individuals through effectively segregated neighbourhoods and differential treatment in schools. This also gave me a bird's eye view of the politics of poverty and the community impacts.

And then I went to college to teach in 1999. In short, I carried over my community development orientation and approach to both the content of my teaching and my role. The latter entailed finding initiatives that worked with over 350 community partners to generate projects that could extend beyond artificial and semester constructed time frames. I sought opportunities that created an engagement with the community through partners that could allow students to participate in the life these micro communities (e.g., schools). However, the bureaucracy of the college often worked against this type of engagement other than for a few enlightened administrative leaders. (Ironically, or not so much, they were Child and Youth Care practitioners.)

On the teaching side it was gratifying to see the publication of the Ontario provincial report on "The Roots of Youth Violence". It gave the words and documentation of what I had lived and worked through throughout the 1990's. It also placed youth work as central to the life and death aspects of this necessary, but undervalued, type of work. This also confirmed for me that the true solutions for the majority of young people lay not in continuing to apply narrow clinical lens but required more broad-based community-based approaches that focused on prevention, promotion and early intervention. The village loomed large as central to solutions but flew in the face of models that had been inherited from the collective medical/psychiatric DNA. There needed to be a shift, but it was not an either or but rather the challenge to forge a synthesis of what was relevant and useful from both paradigms.



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During this time, I stumbled across the Restorative Justice model which for Canadians and Ontarians was a small tag line in the renewal process of the Youth Criminal Justice Act. I was fortunate to be introduced to it through Rupert Ross's book "Return to the Teachings". His work was not simply an introduction to the Restorative model but also to the deep spiritual and historical roots in Indigenous and First Nation ways of being.

This is what spurred me on to see it as not only a way of addressing 'justice' related issues through a different lens but also as a basis for practice which nicely complemented, mirrored and enhanced the core relational work of Child and Youth Care practitioners. From that point on as they say, 'that's all she wrote'. One of my professors at University (in philosophy, mind you) said "do one thing and one thing only". I took him at his word. That is what I have been doing for the past 20 years, Restorative Practices.

### **Back to the Past in Order to see the Future.**

One of the dilemmas I grappled with in the 1990's was the lack of political consciousness or activity on the part of Child and Youth Care practitioner's in all forms, individually, in institutions, in education and as a profession. I would say that in many regards this dilemma has been somewhat resolved. The resolution rests with what I see as the new and next generation of leaders and practitioners. Many of them are part of the generation that are now pursuing their Master's and, in some cases, PhD's. What I see is on the part of many of them a finer eye on critical issues, analysis and identity issues with a keen sense of the necessity to hear the voices of children and youth who are the most affected.

This arises as we move into times that are again, dark politically, and I would add darker than before as the reaction to inequity transforms into ideological populism of a nationalist bent that focuses on walls, exclusion and preserving hollow senses of identity.



While there is still much to be done in the realm of Child and Youth Care work, since addressing needs and ensuring rights for those who are made vulnerable, is part the ongoing historical struggle in order to achieve universal inclusion and equity.

However, I am emboldened to have hope because of the next generation of thought and practice leaders on the rise.

I leave with two quotes:

I am only one,  
But still I am one.  
I cannot do everything,  
But still I can do something;  
And because I cannot do everything,  
I will not refuse to do the something that I can do  
– Grover, 1916, p. 28

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”  
– Margaret Mead in Lutkehaus, 2008, p. 261

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# Central Themes in Child and Youth Care

Mark Krueger

Editor's Note

*This article was originally published in CYC-Online in January of 2000 (<https://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/cycol-0100-krueger.html>).*

*That date is significant to me as that was when I was first hired as a Child and Youth Care Worker. I can say with confidence that at that time I had very little idea what I was getting into, and it was articles like this one that helped me more fully understand the field (still getting there!) and to which I return regularly to remind myself of the meaning, challenges, excitement, and value of working with young people. Looking back over nearly 20 years of front-line practice, Mark Krueger's words still resonate and provide opportunity for reflection on the value of this forum for sharing knowledge, research, wisdom, experience and understanding with those entering the field, as I did, with little clue what we are doing but a desire to figure that out and do it well. CYC-Net has been there for me throughout my career, as I struggled to understand a concept or put into context some new development or shift in society; I could always count on having this storehouse of information to turn to, and a community of people who care about children and youth to remind me why it matters.*

Janice Daley, CYC-Online Assistant Editor



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Coming from your center, being there, teaming up, meeting them where they're at, interacting together, counseling on-the-go, creating circles of care, discovering and using self, and caring for one another.

#### Abstract

*During the past 40 years, significant advances have been made in understanding and developing professional child and youth care with troubled children. In this article, which first appeared in the Journal of Child and Youth Care, 5.1 (1991), the literature is reviewed and concepts, principles and themes for teaching and learning are presented.*

Child and youth care is about caring and acting “about being there, thinking on your feet, interacting, and growing with children. It is rich, intense, difficult work that requires passion and commitment. When it goes well, troubled children can make tremendous strides. When it goes poorly, their obstacles may seem almost impossible to overcome.

As important as it has always been, however, child and youth care was not well understood or developed in North America until the middle of the century when a few pioneers began studying and writing about it. Since then there have been numerous contributions to the knowledge base from practitioners, teachers, and administrators. In this paper their work, and the themes that appear to from it will be reviewed.

### **A brief chronology of the professional child and youth care literature**

According to a study conducted by the National Organization of Child Care Worker Associations (Krueger et al., 1987), professional child and youth care in North America is practiced across a continuum of services including



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treatment centers, group homes, correctional institutions, special schools, temporary shelter care.

Facilities, independent living programs, foster and natural homes, communities, and street corners. Its roots, however, are in residential treatment. In the 1950's child and youth care advocates began to write about residential treatment as a holistic method that with the proper skill and adequate knowledge of human development could be used to teach, treat, and nurture troubled children.

In *Children Who Hate and Controls from Within: Techniques for the Treatment of the Aggressive Child*, Redl and Wineman (1951, 1957) introduced psychodynamic management techniques and ego support programs for residential care. Redl, a leading pioneer in the professionalization movement, also developed a popular counselling technique called "The Life Space Interview" (1959). Meanwhile, other pioneers like Myer (1958), Burmeister (1961), Trieschman et al. (1969), Foster et al. (1972), and Beker et al. (1972) wrote books about creating the therapeutic milieu. These books, of which *The Other Twenty Three Hours* (Treichsman et al., 1969) is best known, provided a foundation for the systematic care of children and youth throughout the course of a day.

Others found new ways of applying psychodynamic, human development, sociological, cultural, and social learning theories. For example, Nicholas Long (Long, 1966; Long, et al., 1976; Powell, 1990), a student of Redl's, developed a child care method (The Conflict Cycle) for dealing with stress and anger. Maier (1975, 1979, 1987) identified the components of care and described the important role care and caregiving play in human development for children at home and away from home. Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1979), the recognized leader of a major paradigm shift in the science of human development, introduced ecological caregiving and caring human connections. Vorath and Brendtro (1974)



developed a group method of caregiving that is based on sociological concepts. Weaver (1990) urged greater sensitivity to cultural differences and described methods of cross-cultural care. Several authors advocated for social learning and competency approaches (Durkin, 1990; Ferguson and Anglin, 1985; Fox 1990).

In a comprehensive textbook, *Re-Educating Troubled Youth*, Brendtro and Ness, (1983) reviewed major child and youth care developments and practices from historical as well as modern perspectives. Proposals for improving the group care system, child and youth care environments, and curricula for teaching child and youth care work were also developed (Ainsworth and Fulcher, 1981; Beker and Feuerstein, in press; Krueger, 1986, 1990; Linton, 1969, 1971; Maier, 1987; McElroy, 1988; Reiger and DeVries, 1974; VanderVen, et al., 1982; Whittaker, 1980), as were additional books about techniques (Krueger, 1988; Savicki and Brown, 1981).

Recently, Brendtro et al. (1990) presented their research on the Native American Circle of Courage and encouraged members of the field to study and advocate for similar values of belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity in working with troubled children. Authors have also turned to creative writing as a way to describe the rich and intensive nature of the work and to portray the roles of self-discovery and personal growth in child and youth care (Condit, 1989; Fewster, 1990; Krueger 1987a, 1990). Finally, four recent anthologies, *Choices in Caring* (Krueger and Powell, 1990), *Perspectives in Professional Child and Youth Care* (Anglin et al. 1990), *Knowledge Utilization in Child and Youth Care Practice* (Bekerand Eisikovits, in press), and *Challenging the Limits of Care* (Small and Alwon, 1988) include chapters that cover the scope of the field.

A review of these anthologies, the references cited earlier, and articles in *Child and Youth Care Quarterly*, *The Journal of Child and Youth Care*, *The*



*Journal of Child and Youth Care Work*, and *The Child Care Administrator*, led to the conclusions discussed in the next sections.

## **Developmental care**

Developmental care has become the central theme in child and youth care practice and in this context Maier's work (1979, 1987) is significant. A collection of his papers, titled *Developmental Group Care of Children: Concepts and Practice* (Maier, 1987), is the most comprehensive analysis of care and its applications. In one pivotal paper, *The Core of Care: Essential Ingredients for the Development of Children at Home and Away from Home* (Maier, 1987, pp. 109-120), he identifies the components in care as bodily comfort, differentiations, rhythmic interactions, the element of predictability, dependability, and personalized behavioral training. He concludes that child and youth care or caregiving requires sensitivity to and interventions that address:

- (a) children's basic physical needs and privacy requirements;
- (b) their differences in temperament;
- (c) their underlying developmental rhythms;
- (d) their need for predictable responses and dependable adults; and
- (e) the importance of the personal element in behavioral training.

From his work and the work of many of the authors noted above, and others, at least eight basic principles appear to have emerged:

1. Care is a central element in building helping relationships;
2. When caregiving and care-receiving are mutual, a nurturing human connection is formed (Maier, 1987; Trieschman, 1982);



3. The components in the core of care as defined by Maier are essential for the development of children at home and away from home (Maier, 1987, pp. 109-120);
4. Child and youth care is a sophisticated practice that requires considerable skill and formal knowledge;
5. Effective child and youth care workers are caring people (Austin and Halpin, 1989);
6. Every child needs a connection with "at least one person who is crazy about him or her" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 5);
7. Children are more apt to respond to psychodynamic, sociological, social learning, ecological, and human development approaches when they feel cared about;
8. Care work takes time, patience, and persistence.



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## **Child and youth care work themes**

In comparing personal experiences (practicing and teaching care over twenty years) with the literature, nine additional themes evolved. In the author's opinion, these themes outline key knowledge areas for teaching and learning in child and youth care.

### ***Coming from your Center***

"I tell them to follow their bliss," Joseph Campbell, the famous mythologist, responded during a television interview in which he was asked what advice he gave students about choosing their work. After devoting his life to studying myths and religions throughout history, he knew that people could only be happy if they made choices that came from their own spiritual center. Al Treischman, a renowned leader in this field, once talked about having a "twinkle in your eye" for working with children (Treischman, 1982) and workers often talk about a feeling they have in their guts for the work. The message here is clear: the primary motive for being a caregiver has to be that something in your center or gut or heart or all of these is telling you this is what you want to do. Without this feeling, there is not much that can be learned that will be helpful.

### ***Being there***

Troubled children have been psychologically and or physically abandoned throughout their lives and their greatest fear is that they will be abandoned again. To trust and grow, they need dependable and predictable connections (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Maier, 1987; Krueger and Powell, 1990) "caregivers who they can count on, who are on hand to talk when they are ready, to support them when they are motivated to learn, to encourage them to try again when they fail (Krueger, 1988) and to also be



there when they are neither ready, motivated, nor interested in a helping hand. Thus, coming into the field requires a commitment to being there with an understanding of the time it takes for troubled children to begin to trust adults.

### ***Teaming up***

Teamwork is the in thing (Garner, 1988). Decisions about how to treat, educate and care for youth require the insight and consensus of all those who are involved in the lives of the children, including child and youth care workers, administrators, consultants, parents, and the children themselves. Further, these decisions need the mutual support of everyone as they are being implemented.

### ***Meeting them where they're at***

We need to relate to and work with children as developing beings ... It is important to remind ourselves that the developmental approach does not permit preoccupation with deviant, pathological, or defective behavior. ... When an individual's affect, behavior, and cognition are evaluated as distinct processes, care workers can rely on predictable patterns of development progression instead. (Maier, 1987, pp. 2-4).

Maier and the other developmentalists have shown that troubled children can only respond to self and skill-building interventions that are geared to their emotional, cognitive, social, and physical needs, and that are conducted in a process of care (Beker and Feuerstein, in press; Maier, 1987, pp.109-120). The goal is to meet them where they are at, with child and youth care interventions (Durkin, 1990; Fox, 1990; Juul, 1989; Krueger, 1983; Maier, 1987; Munoz, Savicki and Brown, 1981) that focus on building strengths rather than concentrating on weaknesses.



### ***Interacting together***

"When we do things to youth and not with them, it's not going to work so well" (Trieschman, 1982). "Children are not objects, they are subject beings and caring is always an action carried out by one subject being in regard to another subject being" (Austin and Halpin, 1989, p. 2). This requires a nonjudgmental, unconditional caring attitude that is based on valuing and understanding all children as unique individuals who are capable of making their own choices (Fewster, 1990). Caregivers can never consciously allow or give permission to children to do anything physically or emotionally harmful to themselves or others, but their greatest hope has to be that through their teaching, counselling, and nurturing interactions with children, the children will learn and be empowered to make the best choices for themselves (Krueger and Powell, 1990).

### ***Counseling on the go***

Crises are opportune times for adults to model and teach social and emotional competence ... For children under stress we must interpret adult intervention as an act of support and protection rather than hostility. ... We must acknowledge and accept the feelings of children without necessarily accepting the way in which they choose to express them (Excerpts from Nicholas Long's principles of the Conflict Cycle as summarized by Powell, 1990, p. 26).

Troubled children need counselling at bedtime, during kickball, in the arts room, and during fights and temper tantrums as much as during scheduled office visits; and no matter how tough or aggressive or passive they are at times, the prevailing underlying feelings they experience are anxiety, fear, sadness, and depression (Long et al., 1976; Redl, 1959; Trieschman, et al., 1969). With the use of psychodynamic (Long et al., 1976;



Powell, 1990; Redl, 1959) guided group interaction (Brendtro and Ness, 1983), social learning (Fox, 1990), creative/ expressive (Juul, 1989; Pirozak, 1990) and self-discovery (Fewster, 1990) techniques, they need help to learn alternative methods of expression and to cope with these feelings as they surface throughout the course of daily living.

### ***Creating circles of care***

In traditional Native society, it was the duty of all adults to serve as teachers for younger persons. Child rearing was not just the responsibility of biological parents but children were nurtured within a larger circle of significant others. From the earliest days of life, the child experienced a network of caring adults (Brendtro et al., 1990, p. 37).

In studying the Native American circle of courage, Brendtro, Brokenleg, and Van Bockern (1990) understood the ecology of care. Today in caregiving, as in most other helping professions, it is widely acknowledged that parents, siblings, relatives, helpers and members of the community are all part of a troubled child's circle of care, and long-term change is dependent on making this circle functional again (Brendtro et al., 1990). Thus, every effort has to be made to conduct care giving interventions in homes and communities, and in harmony with familial (Garfat, 1990) communal, cultural (Weaver, 1990), and interdisciplinary team systems (Fulcher, 1981; Garner, 1977, 1982, 1988; Krueger, 1987b; VanderVen, 1979) that are interconnected with a child's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

### ***Discovering and using self***

"Charolette was inviting me to consider the idea that self-examination and discovery is a process of observing self in action. At the broader level this is compatible with the preference for cerebral realms of theory and philosophy to follow experience, rather than vice versa" (Fewster, 1990, p.



147). "The idea is that when we are experiencing another person, particularly at the feeling or emotional level, we are actually experiencing ourselves" (Fewster, 1990, p. 42).

These selected quotes come from conversations between a worker and his supervisor in *Being in Child Care: A Journey into Self* (Fewster, 1990), which beautifully exemplifies and summarizes the belief that a full understanding of and relationship formation with children can only be achieved through self-awareness and discovery (Fewster, 1990). In child and youth care, workers with the help of supervisors, teammates and teachers have to constantly strive to understand their own feelings and experiences in relationship to how they influence interactions with children and families.

### ***Caring for one another***

"It is inherent that caregivers be nurtured themselves and experience sustained caring support in order to transmit this quality of care to others" (Maier, 1987, p. 119). Child and youth care is difficult and demanding work. To overcome the stress and fatigue, managers, supervisors and practitioners in professional child and youth care organizations have to do everything possible to create a supportive, caring environment for themselves (Bieman, 1987; Krueger, 1986a, 1986b, 1987b; Mattingly, 1977) with the awareness that the patterns of care they create for one another are interconnected with the patterns of care they create for the children.

In professional child and youth care, coming from your center, being there, teaming up, meeting them where they're at, interacting together, counselling on the go, creating circles of care, discovering and using self, and caring for one another, are actions, thoughts and feelings that when woven together provide a foundation for effective daily interactions. Further, it is the holistic mix of teaching, counselling, and nurturing



approaches as summarized above rather than any single approach that makes child and youth care unique from other helping roles.

## **Conclusion**

### ***The growing knowledge base and the need for care***

The references in this article are representative of the work of many authors who drew upon both practice experiences and work from related fields such as psychology, special education, social work, human development, and the arts to collectively create a rich and exciting knowledge base for a new profession. A knowledge base, however, is a dynamic entity which is constantly changing and growing and open to interpretation. This contribution is the result of one effort to summarize and organize the literature at a given point and time. The goals have been to provide an outline for curriculum development and to encourage further investigation. With the changes in contemporary child rearing patterns and the rising numbers of poor and dysfunctional families (Carman and Small, 1988; FICE, 1988; Mech, 1988), the need to learn and practice child and youth care is greater than ever before.



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**MARK KRUEGER** was a professor of Youth Work at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He began his career as a direct care worker and believed in the value of relational practice and activities in the daily life of children and youth. He contributed a substantial volume of writing and reflections on the field of Child and Youth Care.



# It's Only a Matter of Time: Cross-Cultural Reflections

Leon Fulcher

Editor's note

*In a recent discussion with author Leon Fulcher, this classic writing was remembered. It was previously published in Relational Child and Youth Care Practice and in the book Making Moments Meaningful in Child and Youth Care Practice. With the author's permission it is again shared in this issue of CYC-Online. Fulcher described that after spending a recent five weeks in Africa, he was reaffirmed in his assessment that "while Europeans and Americans have made some progress with the meanings that surround 'ego-centric' and 'ethno-centric', little progress has been made with the ways in which 'tempo-centric' socialisation is arguably even more important if we are to notice opportunity moments in the upbringing of children." We're thankful for Leon's international perspective and a view above and beyond our individual time zones and daily experience.*

**W**hilst living and working in Europe, I once heard a story about an exchange between an American and a Scotsman that made me chuckle – since it echoed my own cross-cultural experiences with both parties, as shown it what follows ...

A young American from that country's Southwest was touring the Highlands of Scotland. He found himself one evening in a traditional Highland pub where he engaged one of the locals in wide-ranging



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conversation about differences between their respective countries. Late in the conversation, the young American explained how, where he lived, there was a common phrase “Mañana, Mañana” which means “tomorrow, or by and by”, the “mañana habit” being a Spanish-American phrase of procrastination. The young American asked his new Scottish friend if there was anything similar in the local vernacular. The Scotsman thought for a time before answering “I cannae think of a phrase that conveys such a state of urgency”.

Having lived and worked internationally for more than thirty years in Europe, the South Pacific and the Middle East – with blocks of time spent also in Malaysia and China – the issue of time and its cross-cultural meanings has been a recurring theme underpinning all those experiences.

My first international trip came as an eye-opener since the only real encounter with time differences before that time involved crossing between Mountain and Pacific time zones as a youth travelling to visit my grandfather. Some personal reflections about cross-cultural meanings of time are offered in what follows in the hope they might be of interest since time impacts so directly on relational child and youth care practice. Drawn from personal and professional experience, attention is drawn to ten questions that highlight different themes about time and what textbooks call “tempocentric perspectives” that impact on child and youth care practice.

## **1. What Day Is It? – A focus on calendars**

Most children and young people grow up learning to read a calendar but few learn that in different places, there are different calendars. In the West, young people grow up learning to read time according to a solar calendar based on the positioning of the earth as it revolves around the sun. Elsewhere many people learn to use a lunar calendar which calculates



time according to the positioning of the moon. For example, December 2, 2005 (2/12/2005) in the solar calendar translates into November 1, 1426 (1/11/1426) in the Hijri or Islamic lunar calendar. The free encyclopedia website Wikipedia offers a treasure chest of information about cross-cultural variations when it comes to calendars. For example, one finds that the Gregorian calendar is used nearly everywhere in the world. A modification of the Julian calendar, it was first proposed by the Neapolitan doctor Aloysius Lilius, and was decreed by Pope Gregory XIII, for whom it was named on 24 February 1582. The *Julian calendar* was introduced in 46 BC by Julius Caesar and took force in 45 BC (*709 ab urbe condita*)<sup>1</sup>. It has a regular year of 365 days divided into 12 months, and a leap day is added to February every four years. Hence the Julian year is on average 365.25 days long. Those who care about such matters note that the astronomical solstices and the equinoxes advance, on average, by about 11 minutes per year against the Julian year, causing the calendar to gain a day about every 134 years, hence the argument given for changing to the Gregorian calendar, 50 years after Jacques Cartier discovered Canada and claimed it for France.

The Islamic calendar (also called “Hijri calendar”) is the calendar used to date events in many predominantly Muslim countries. A purely lunar calendar having 12 lunar months in a year of about 354 days, this is used by Muslims everywhere to determine the proper day on which to celebrate Muslim holy days. Because this lunar year is about 11 days shorter than the

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<sup>1</sup> *Ab urbe condita* (AUC or a.u.c.) is Latin for “from the founding of the city” (of Rome), supposed to have happened in 753 BC. It was one of several methods used for dating years in the Roman era, when the Roman calendar and the Julian calendar were in use. It appears to have been widely replaced by the anno Diocletiani (A.D.) system which in turn was gradually superseded by the anno Domini (A.D.) system of Dionysius Exiguus. Some have claimed that an era *ab urbe condita* (from the founding of the city of Rome) did not, in reality, exist in the ancient world, and the use of reckoning the years in this way is modern.



solar year, Muslim holy days, although celebrated on fixed dates in their own calendar, usually shift 11 days earlier each successive solar year. Islamic years are also called Hijra years after the first year of the Prophet Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina. Thus each numbered year is designated either H or AH, the latter being the initials of the Latin anno Hegirae (in the year of the Hijra). Most lunar calendars are also lunisolar, such as the Hebrew, Chinese and Hindu calendars, as were most calendar systems used in antiquity. The reason for this is that a year is not evenly divisible by an exact number of lunations, so without any correction the seasons will drift with respect to the calendar year. The only widely-used purely lunar calendar is the Islamic calendar, which always consists of twelve lunations. As a result of this, it is mostly used for religious purposes, alongside a secular solar calendar, and Islamic feasts perform a full circle with respect to the seasons every 33 years.

If that isn't confusing enough, depending on one's cultural traditions or where one lives, one might use the Bahá'í calendar which has 19 months, each having 19 days, the Coptic calendar based on the ancient Egyptian calendar; the Iranian calendar – used widely in Afghanistan; or the Thai solar calendar which counts from the Buddhist era. It is also worth noting that indigenous peoples of North America, the South Pacific and elsewhere in South America and Africa operate with their own particular calendar variations. Given such a variety of calendars, one might reasonably ask what relevance this could possibly have for child and youth care practice? The answers depend on the extent of cultural diversity within any given group of children or young people and their families with whom one is working. The greater the diversity, the more important it may be to take account of possible differences in the way families calculate time. Perhaps more importantly, one must become ever wary about assuming that time is measured according to the "facts" that appear on one's own personal



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calendar and timepiece. How many different calendars might be influential when determining yearly plans at your work place?

## **2. What Season Is It? – A focus on climatic changes and human activity**

A season is one of the major divisions of the year, generally based on periodic changes in weather over the course of a year – however measured. In the so-called temperate and polar regions of the world there are generally four seasons recognized as Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. But in the Southern Hemisphere, these seasons appear at different times of the solar year, such that one might comfortably wear shorts and t-shirt at Christmas time, and celebrate with a beach BBQ instead of being huddled beside a fire as in the Northern Hemisphere. In some tropical and subtropical regions it is quite common to speak of the rainy (wet or monsoon) season versus the dry season, as the amount of precipitation may vary more dramatically than the average temperature. In other tropical areas a three-way division into hot, rainy and cool seasons might be used. Then, in other parts of the world, special “seasons” are loosely defined according to natural events such as the hurricane or typhoon season, the tornado season, and a wildfire or burning season. Still other places might identify the hunting season or the planting season, etc. The main point here is that time is once again divided into segments according to the climate, or by activities that are linked with climate. Child and youth care workers engaging with native youths in Northern Canada must plan their activities around traditional hunting, fishing and trapping seasons, when animals, birds and fishes move through migratory cycles and link time to seasonal activities for people. Elsewhere, child and youth care workers might find themselves engaging with young people according to particular sporting seasons, moving from football to basketball to ice



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hockey or baseball and cricket. In each example, human activities are linked to social activities, and time is measured from one season to the next – often without much conscious reflection given to what that might mean for kids and the families with whom we work.

### **3. What's The Time? – Greenwich Mean Time and Time Zones**

Time zones represent another temporal dimension that will be instantly familiar to anyone who has travelled East or West for any distance at all. When driving, it is not uncommon to find signs posted to report a time zone crossing. Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) is the name given to mean solar time at the Royal Greenwich Observatory, Greenwich, London, England, which by convention is at 0 degrees geographic longitude. Noon Greenwich Mean Time is not the moment when the Sun crosses the Greenwich meridian (and reaches its highest point in the sky in Greenwich). Because of the Earth's uneven speed in its elliptic orbit and its axial tilt this event may be up to 16 minutes away from noon GMT but represents the annual average of the Sun's motion, thereby justifying the notion of 'mean' in Greenwich Mean Time. As Great Britain grew into an advanced maritime nation, English mariners kept their timepieces on GMT in order to calculate their longitude "from the Greenwich meridian". Such action did not affect shipboard time itself, which was still solar time. This combined with mariners from other nations using the same method, eventually led to GMT being used world-wide as a reference time independent of location. A scheme was devised where the surface of the planet was divided into twenty four "time zones", each separated by 15° of longitude and offset by one hour from its neighbour. And time zones have been identified as a number of hours and half-hours "ahead of GMT" or "behind GMT". Hourly time signals were first broadcast from Greenwich Observatory on 5 February 1924 and have continued ever since.



With the introduction of Daylight Savings Time in many parts of the world, one literally springs forward in time on a particular day and then leaps backward or returns to Standard Time roughly six months later in the year. Curiously, some places like the Province of Newfoundland in Canada have a half-hour time difference from everywhere else. Time zones feature prominently with international travel, especially if one crosses the International Date Line and loses or gains a whole day, depending on which direction one is flying. After such trips, one is almost always left with jet lag as the body clock reconfigures from one place and time zone to another. Child and youth care workers are often challenged to calculate the best time to make long distance telephone calls when supporting young people with family members living in other parts of the country. While time zones within a country may be mastered with relative ease, international telephone calls present greater challenges. Calls are not infrequently received in the middle of the night because a caller in one time zone has had difficulty working out 8 to 12-hour, or even 22-hour time zone differences. Child and youth care workers often don't have a moment to think about the impact of time zones. However, with increased travel and movements of family members to different parts of the country or world, it's not long before time zones become a reality in working relationships with kids.

#### **4. What Day of the Week Is It? – Weekdays, Weeknights and Weekends**

In practical terms, the working week for child and youth care is commonly divided into three important segments: weekdays, weeknights and weekends. For children and young people, weekdays are normally the time when they attend school, except during school holidays. For workers, weekdays are often about meetings and attending to issues for young



people at times when the “professional” world is available. Weeknights on the other hand are commonly very active times in child and youth care work. Activities, clubs and outings are often built into weeknights, along with homework and quiet time, if ever there are such times. Weekends present even greater challenges and opportunities since these are the times when staff normally want time off work for family and social pursuits. Weekends are also times when young people make home visits, get involved in social activities with peers, and perhaps even get involved in activities that require interventions with authorities. Such patterns are fairly common in different parts of the world. However, few stop to consider that distinctions between weekday, weeknight and weekend actually change depending on cultural practices and where you live (Fulcher, 2002). For example, in the United Arab Emirates workdays run Saturday through Wednesday and the weekend is Thursday and Friday, with Friday being the holy day. In Israel, the weekend holy day of Shabot is Saturday, while elsewhere the weekend is Saturday and Sunday when Christians celebrate their holy day. Thus one finds that cross-cultural considerations play a big part in breaking time into segments called months, weeks and days. Child and youth care workers rarely have reason to stop and think about such matters unless cultural diversity in their programmes requires it. However, in very practical terms, try reorganising the staff roster to give added cover on the weekends and staff complaints will be heard complaining about needing time off with their families and friends. Or think about happens if the agency imposes an overtime ban. Such actions will quickly confirm that weekly time cycles do indeed matter, regardless of whether we stop to think about it.



## **5. What Do People Say About Time? – Daily Comments and Phrases**

The story shared at the start of this paper referred to “mañana” as a Spanish-American phrase of procrastination. As one travels one finds that there are cross-cultural parallels almost everywhere. How many times might one hear North American kids say “later” when asked to complete their daily chores? Throughout the Middle East – in the Arabic world anyway – one frequently hears the phrase “Inshaallah” which literally means “if God wills it”. Depending on how this word is used, it may actually refer to its literal meaning, as deeply religious people recognise that a higher power is required if they are to fulfil a given task. However, depending on the circumstances around which the phrase is used, “Inshaallah” may also mean something like “ok, if I get around to it”. A related phrase adds a specific time dimension to such exchanges when one hears “Bukra Inshaallah”. With such an alteration, the literal meaning becomes “tomorrow if God wills it”. However, the cultural meaning is more likely to be something like “I’ll see what I can do” but without much commitment towards following through. So, depending on where child and youth care workers find themselves, important messages are conveyed about time, as noted earlier in a discussion about metaphors used daily in this field of work (Fulcher, 2004). Amidst the hustle and bustle of a busy day or working week child and youth care workers rarely stop and think about such matters even though their relational work with young people and families might be that much more effective.

## **6. Whose Time Shall We Follow? – Western Time and Others’ Time**

Not everyone is aware that there are different attitudes and cultural traditions concerning time. Time orientation, time structuring or planning,



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and time management actually have quite different meanings in different cultures (Leigh, 1998). Cross-cultural exchanges between New Zealand Maori and New Zealanders of European origin will invariably highlight questions about which 'time' each party is using when organising an event. The same is likely to be true with respect to exchanges between Pacific Island peoples and peoples of European origins. This is not meant to imply that one cultural group maintains a high degree of time orientation while the other group doesn't. Instead, it's about what variables are taken into account when determining the right time for an event to begin. For Maori and Pacific Island peoples, the issue frequently concerns the issue of readiness and preparedness while for Europeans the concern is more likely to be what the clock says and when the event was supposed to begin. Similar issues are encountered in the Arab world where one might be asked whether the ground rules that apply will be Western time or Arabic time. Again, the issue appears to be more about social readiness to begin rather than an arbitrary reading of the clock. The arts and literature are filled with examples of cross-cultural dilemmas when reviewing ways in which Westerners engage with indigenous peoples in different parts of the world where clocks and timepieces hold different meanings for both groups. And yet experiences in Asia have taught me to be "on time" since time management there may be even more rigorous than in the West. For all these reasons, child and youth care workers might usefully review how young people with whom they are working manage their time, especially with curfews and getting to school on time.

## **7. Does Time Ever Stand Still? – Time Out**

Next time you are watching a televised sporting event, count how many times the referee calls "time out", whether because one of the teams seeks a pause in the proceedings or because someone rules that a short-term



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pause is required. In child and youth care work, there are many occasions when “time out” may be called, and such events have considerable meaning for all parties involved. “Time out” may be called for troublesome behaviour, as when a young person loses control and needs time to regain composure. Such periods are usually part of an overall treatment plan and are timed to follow immediately on from a tantrum or episode of unruly behaviour. Staff members also take “time out”. This might occur after a particularly difficult incident at work when they need to regain composure or recover from the fatigue of an all-night crisis. “Time out” might also mean a supervised walk for a young person living temporarily in a secure unit, when one-to-one time is considered important and going for a walk is deemed therapeutic. As one travels internationally, it is interesting the ways in which different turns of phrase might be used to highlight this “time out” dynamic (Lakhoff & Johnson, 1980). For example, in Australia one might hear about somebody going “walk-about”, while in New Zealand there are occasions when someone might be “going bush”. In each instance, the result means taking some time out from the normal routine and often spending time alone or with very few others. Time doesn’t really stop in such instances but how time is used does change compared with how it is spent by others. “Time out” normally means that something isn’t just right and there is need to get something sorted out before signalling “time in” and resuming play. In child and youth care, knowing when to call “time out” and use such time productively is an essential feature of good practice.

## **8. What’s The Deadline? – Just in the Nick of Time**

Each day there are deadlines that child and youth care workers have to meet. The school bus arriving, meals on the table, reports being written – all represent deadlines of one sort or another that need to be met. Such



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time pressures add greatly to the stresses associated with child and youth care work, and all the more so when different young people have urgent needs that have to be met – all at the same time! Child and youth care workers may have faced deadlines if they enrolled in college or university courses and were given precise timelines when course assignments had to be submitted. Deadlines are also faced whenever applying for a new job or promotion within the same agency. In each case, clear messages are given about when applications close or when paperwork must be handed in to be considered for a particular position or promotion. In reality, deadlines are a daily feature of this work. When responding to deadlines one is commonly faced with urgency, regardless of whether the ‘urgent’ matter is actually important. The more one deals with urgent matters the harder it is to refocus on the important matters that might really make a difference. So child and youth care workers need to ask: Is this engagement with a particular young person really urgent or important? Is it both urgent and important? Or do we need to refocus attention on what is important with this kid and let somebody else attend to what may seem urgent to somebody else? There are many ways in which the message “hurry up” is conveyed to many people in child and youth care work. How often do we “slow down” and pay greater attention to the little issues that are really important for kids?

## **9. What’s Happening? – Now, Not Now and Immediacy**

When child and youth care workers find themselves in the midst of a crisis, time takes on quite a different dimension associated with immediacy. It’s not that time suddenly stands still; it’s more about requiring one to focus on the meaning of “Now” and what is happening right now with this young person in this situation and place. Everything else fades into the background, especially when a child is sick, a wound is





bleeding, a suicide attempt has been initiated, or when a fight has to be calmed.

In instances such as these, distinctions between “now” and “not now” are blurred by the immediacy of relational engagement. But crisis situations are not the only such instances when “now” and “not now” are important. When engaging with young people who have attention deficit problems, or autism, a child and youth care worker needs to maintain focus on immediacy since behavioural prompts and feedback are often the central issues for responsive work with such youngsters. There is often little time for reflection until after the immediate concerns in the encounter have moved on, and some elements of closure or new level of stability has been achieved. In such cases it is difficult to focus on deferred gratification or to plan very far ahead because of the particular time orientations that such young people present. Time issues like these can be encountered on a daily basis in some child and youth care situations. Without careful thought and attention to how workers respond on such occasions there are frequently missed opportunities and our professional interventions with young people become re-active instead of pro-active.

## **10. What Is Tempocentric Socialisation? – Vacations and School Holidays**

Finally, it may be worthwhile stepping back from specific questions to consider the wider issue associated with time orientations and how we acquire them. This is not to suggest that one start using the technical term “tempocentric” in daily exchanges or in child and youth care staff meetings. It is important, though, to recognize that the subject of this paper has been and is the subject of international scholarly research, not simply personal reflections. First of all, the word “tempo” is the Italian word meaning “time”. Those who have studied music or performed musically at



any time will know that “tempo” is linked to the idea of rhythms, and how slow or fast a piece of music is played. “Centric” on the other hand means “having or being situated at or near a center”. Hence one might find certain parallels between “egocentric”, “ethnocentric” and “tempocentric”. Someone who is “tempocentric” tends to identify their own personal and cultural interpretations of time as absolute, or as being more important than any others. But how, you might ask, does one develop a “tempocentric” perspective? As one thinks back to their primary and secondary school experiences, what memories come to mind? Did the school bell ring at set intervals thereby reinforcing messages about time? Did school holidays and vacation periods follow particular dates or correspond with particular public holidays?

One acquires a particular time orientation through daily socialisation experiences and the sum total of these reinforce a particular “tempocentric” perspective. Unless one engages in cross-cultural experiences that take them out of their own particular time zone or socio-cultural template, there is little reason to question whether time is an absolute measure or a highly variable concept shaped directly by cultural meanings. So when asked “What time is it?” there are actually quite a variety of answers that might be given, depending on who is asking and where they are directing their question.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, ten questions have been asked and themes considered about meanings of time that often impact on child and youth care practice. Whether referring to calendars, to seasons of the year, contemplating time zones or days of the week, conversational comments or cultural orientations about time, taking time out, meeting deadlines, responding to a crisis or reflecting on how one acquires a particular time



orientation – each theme is arguably important if child and youth care practice is to be truly relational. Relational involves an attitude or stance which two or more persons or groups assume toward one another. As such it requires an aspect or quality that connects two or more things or parts as being or belonging or working together or as being of the same kind. Relational means the state of being mutually or reciprocally interested, and so long as one time orientation remains dominant and another’s time orientation is ignored, misunderstood or rejected, then little progress can be made about working together towards shared aims. It is easy to say that “it’s only a matter of time”. But for someone operating from a different time zone, tempo or calendar, it is fundamentally important that one pays attention to their world, not just our own.

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# The Nativity Play

Annette Cockburn

Editor's note

*Some of the most important moments in a child's daily life are easily overlooked or disregarded in context of adult priorities. In this classic reflection by Annette Cockburn we are reminded of the simplicity of childhood.*

The *Learn to Live* end-of-year concert is an event not to be missed. It is full of the richness and the chaos of the world we work in. It is longish, in three languages, and full of surprises. (One year the Angel Gabriel stabbed Joseph behind the curtain at the end.) This year the Nativity Play departed from the norm.

I think sometimes we forget, for all the talk of frankincense and myrrh, that Mary and Joseph were poor people. The scene opens with a group of Street Children playing dice, sharing a loaf of bread and a litre of Coke. The overhead projector casts a pool of light onto the stage, and a street girl comes into the light and hears the age-old message from a voice-over: "Behold, I bring you tidings of great joy" Joseph is not convinced. This is not my child. Don't give me this rubbish about the son of God. Another pool of light, and Joseph is severely reprimanded by a stern angel in the wings. Briefly he apologises to Mary and they set off to find a place for the baby to be born.



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Some groups of Street Children on the stage say: “There is no room here, not in our territory.” There is also an encounter with the police — very stereotypical — but it elicits waves of laughter and feelings of identification from the boys in the audience. The policeman tells the strollers and Mary



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and Joseph to push off (though rather more graphically). I glance at the three representatives from the SA Police Services, who for the first time ever have come to this concert. They are laughing their heads off!

Eventually Mary and Joseph end up under the bridge at the bottom of Napier Street and the people there agree to build them a shack. The scene moves to jugglers and acrobats in the street and we see a virtuoso display from the children. (I assume this is instead of the shepherds.) Some chairs are placed in a line and they become a taxi complete with the tout. They are picking up Wise Men from Khayelitsha. The Wise Men are well dressed and want to go to see the baby born under the bridge in Cape Town. They are bearing gifts.

The Street Worker runs onto the stage. "Come and see the baby," he shouts, and everyone rushes off. In the next scene, the baby is there, one month old — and real. There is a token sheep in a grey blanket who says "bah, bah" on an ad hoc basis.

The Wise Men arrive and offer their gifts, elaborately wrapped in see-through cellophane: eight tins of baby food, a packet of nappies and a parcel containing some vests. My eyes fill with tears. I bet the real Mary would have preferred these gifts to all that frankincense and myrrh!

The rendition, stark, immediate and compelling, lacked no reverence, and was imbued with a sense of excitement and celebration that few traditional nativity plays achieve. Amazing stuff!

**ANNETTE COCKBURN** was a friend and contemporary of CYC-Net co-founder Brian Gannon and worked extensively with street children in Cape Town, South Africa. She passed away on 8 September 2018.



# Postcard from Leon Fulcher

*From Provincial Africa*

**G**reetings colleagues! In this 20<sup>th</sup> year issue of *Child and Youth Care Online*, I thought I might share some of the travel challenges and peculiarities encountered as a 'come-from-away' visiting different parts of Africa in 2018.

For a start, I have to acknowledge that I love living in New Zealand where there are no poisonous creatures or creepy-crawlies! And such nasties as we have were imported by settlers.

Residential child and youth care workers who have experienced live-in working conditions will appreciate that one might encounter quite a wide range of staff accommodation provided in our field. Our recent on-site



**Live in staff accommodation during some of my African travels**



**Our staff accommodation had an infestation of ants under the kitchen sink**



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accommodation in Africa was quite reasonable, although the television didn't work. Oh, and ants!

First night in the flat and we discovered an infestation of ants under the kitchen sink. There was no option but to access insect spray for crawling creatures, and sweep them up. My flatmate had a sinus attack and thereafter moved out. Some

people are incapable of living in residential child and youth care staff accommodation! How many professionals do you work with who have lived in residential staff accommodation? Notice any differences?

Our staff accommodation had no running water. The washroom had a toilet, shower and sink but without the big bin of water located by the sink, there was no water. Water to pour into the toilet cistern and for showering purposes. One doesn't



**A washroom with toilet, sink and shower but no running water**



**A striped amphibian creature lived in the toilet water cistern**



brush their teeth using anything other than bottled water. Boiled water doesn't always work.

While filling the toilet cistern, I was given a fright by a creepy-crawlie that had found its way into the cistern where it could source water and potential flies. I was relieved to see that it was a friendly frog and not a snake!

Hot water showers are taken for granted by most Westerners like me. In our staff accommodation we were provided with a small red plastic rubbish bin. Into the side of this bin had been installed a heating element that plugged into a 240-volt wall plug unit. Just for comparison, in the US and Canada everything operates with 110-volt electricity. 240-volt electricity is only used there when operating an arc welder or an oven!

The hot water certainly heated up very quickly! My worry was about getting it too hot and potentially melting the plastic bin lining. Once mixed with cold water, one scoops cups of warm water to complete the morning shower.



**A portable hot water tank that plugs directly into 240 volt power**



**A plastic bin with a heating element installed - don't overheat!**

Walking around after dark presented rather more challenges. On balance, one avoids walking through tall grass because of snakes. Walking on pathways after rainfall presented new challenges with large centipedes of different types coming out with the moisture. The ones shown in the photo had to disappear before sunrise or they were attacked by big ants that devoured them very quickly.

A whole new world of creepy-crawlies featured there.

Rural squatter camps were noticeable in many places, especially where post-colonial land reforms have been implemented. Different tribal and extended family groups seek access to land that was once owned and

operated by colonial interests. Independence and land reforms have commonly occurred together, or in sequence.

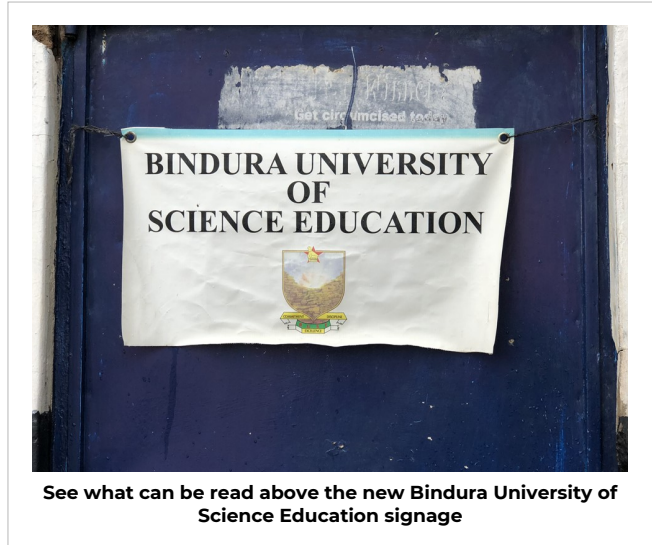


**After the rains, big creepy-crawlies come out at night**



**A rural squatter camp in a place where land is a major issue**

Bindura University of Science Education represents an organisation that is also involved in land reform activities, seeking to maintain educational pathways for young people seeking careers in the agriculture and farming sectors. If



one looks closely above the Bindura University of Science Education sign, it is possible to discern a community health message worthy of note! I was given a book for Christmas by Paul Kenyon (2018) *Dictatorland: The Men Who Stole Africa* that made an impression. If interested in Africa, check it out!



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# Information

## Publishers

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Only advertising related to the Child and Youth Care profession, programs, courses, books, conferences etc. will be accepted. Rates and specifications are listed over the page, or email [advertising@cyc-net.org](mailto:advertising@cyc-net.org)

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**Leon Fulcher** – Transformation, New Zealand

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- Submissions should be no longer than 2500 words
- The style of a paper is up to the author
- We prefer APA formatting for referencing
- We are willing to work with first-time authors to help them get published
- We accept previously published papers as long as copyright permission is assured
- We are open to alternative presentations such as poems, artwork, photography, etc.

Articles can be submitted to the email address below for consideration.

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Send submissions to: [cyconline@cyc-net.org](mailto:cyconline@cyc-net.org)

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