

Has youth work reached its use-by date?

Researchers and academics tackle the issues of values in youth work education and training; pros and cons of professionalisation; the relevance of youth work as a career in the 21st century, and the ethical dilemmas that youth workers face.

What employers really think about teenage employees is also revealed in this issue of Youth Studies Australia, and we look at 'useful' graffiti – how graffiti is being accepted by the wider community as an effective way of preventing Hepatitis C.



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YOUTH WORK:

The problem of values

by Tim Corney

A study of Australian universities that offer youth work courses has found that 'left of centre' values are foundational to youth work and youth worker education. Given this, how can youth worker education in universities be correlated with the so-called 'values-neutral' Competency Based Training of youth workers in TAFE?

In order to enable students to openly study and critique particular value traditions within the youth affairs sector ... it is recommended that a specific "values" subject be included in all youth work course curricula.

YOUTH WORK:

The professionalisation dilemma

by Howard Sercombe

Professionalisation of youth work could lead to corruption with practitioners serving their own interests at the expense of the client group. However, 'ethical problems, lack of clarity, conflict of interest, misrepresentation and lack of discipline are already out there'.

Professionalisation potentially offers an alternative base for discipline, and a foundation for resistance to various government enterprises which may be oppressive to young people or in violation of their civil rights.

YOUTH WORK:

The Loch Ness monster and professionalism

by Judith Bessant

Judith Bessant takes the opportunity of the recent reappearance of the professionalisation debate to give substance to the factors affecting both sides of this 'monster' with the hope that this will facilitate the exchange of ideas and perhaps the resolution of the issue.

The issue of ethics raises a related question about whether an ethical rationale exists for professionalising youth work, and whether such a rationale ought to be the primary reason for professionalisation.

YOUTH WORK:

Has it reached its use-by date?

by Vaughan Bowie

Perhaps the most profound challenge to youth work education and training comes from academics who question the relevancy of youth work in its present form.

By focusing on young people in particular, they believe that youth work can divide various groups who would be better off working together rather than being separated by moral panics about young people as victims, thugs or users.

YOUTH WORK:

Challenging the soft cop syndrome

by Scott Poynting and Rob White

Are youth workers 'soft cops' who are buying into adult representations of young people rather than listening to young people themselves?

Will the politics of social justice and social change give way to the contingent values of pragmatism, thus reinforcing the hard cop versus soft cop tension as the only way in which to construct the youth work mission?

Teenage employability:

Views of employers

by Erica Smith

This research reveals that employers identify many reasons why teenagers are employed, and what they see as their positive and negative attributes.

The Marrickville Mural:

Raising awareness of Hepatitis C prevention

by Suzanne Gleeson, Leigh Cantero, Tanya Jochelson & Chris Rissel

Young people in the inner-city Sydney suburb of Marrickville developed and implemented an aerosol art wall mural displaying HCV prevention messages.

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