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Models of youth work: a framework for positive sceptical reflection

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Abstract

In the post-welfare state, youth workers need models to articulate the purpose and value of their work to politicians and the public, and to explain foundational assumptions about society, young people, values, and mechanisms for personal and social change. Robust on-going discussion about models clarifies the relationship between theory and practice and enables youth work to make use of advances in knowledge in other disciplines, and to innovate constructively when faced with social and political change. Theorisation of models of youth work flourished briefly in the final quarter of the twentieth century. Renewed models of youth work are urgently needed. To re-start this process, this article develops a Framework for Positive Scepticism Reflection. The framework is then used to review four models of youth work developed between 1978 and 1994, to identify their contemporary relevance and where further theoretical work is required to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Key words: Models, youth work, theory, training, history.

THE CONTINUED existence of youth work, and the sources of its funding, cannot be assumed in the twenty-first century post-welfare state. Youth work will receive support only if policy makers can see a positive connection between youth and community work and their policy agendas, if commentators and the public can understand and value what youth workers do, and if youth workers have the tools to be able to refine and reinvent their own practice to retain core values in ways that are relevant to changing social circumstances. Relevant models of youth work can help youth workers to develop clear answers to all these questions, but presently, youth workers do not have such models that will perform all these functions.

Youth work in what I refer to as 'British-influenced youth work' (BIYW) countries has diverged during the last thirty years. Triggered by incremental changes to government policy affecting both youth work goals and service delivery arrangements, Australian youth work is entering a period of re-consideration of the role of youth work, as evidenced by the extensive discussion about the nature of youth work at the 2011 Australian Youth Affairs Coalition Conference. This process of deliberation offers potential for renewal, but can lead to vulnerability, especially if youth workers are not able to articulate the relevance of their work in a changed political landscape.

In the UK, the situation is somewhat different. Policy documents such as *Benefits of Youth Work* (McKee, Oldfield, and Poultney, 2010) relate youth work to key values within government policy frameworks. Training standards documents (Lifelong Learning UK, 2008) articulate the professional training standards required for youth work. However, as seen by recent cutbacks, youth work is also vulnerable in the UK, even with such standards in place. There is still a need for greater theorisation and model development, both to refine youth work practice and to provide a basis for critique of youth work policy.

The central purpose of this article is to revive interest in youth work theory development, especially in BIYW countries. Renewed commitment to theory development is essential to the future health of youth work as an occupation, and to its survival as a distinctive form of practice. Theory development and shared commitment to purposes, values and boundaries provide occupations and professions with a number of benefits. An agreed theory base is essential to explain the contribution of practice to others outside the occupation. It also provides a necessary foundation to guide development of coherent and relevant education and training programmes for practitioners. A clear articulation of purpose and values enables well-considered and timely responses to social policy initiatives pertaining to youth work. A clear understanding of purpose and methods provides a basis from which to demarcate boundaries with other professions. Finally, clarity about theory, purpose, values and methods is essential to the on-going quest to critically develop the discipline and the occupation, and to appropriately connect youth work to new knowledge as it emerges in cogent disciplines.

This article builds both upon the method of personal reflection, questioning and scepticism discussed by Davies (2006), and upon the work of Sterman (1991) who discusses the knowledge claims of models, to develop a Framework for Positive Sceptical Reflection. The Framework is then used to critically assess selected historic models of youth work to determine their theoretical adequacy, usefulness and contemporary relevance. The article concludes with a discussion about how youth work models from the late twentieth century can be reworked to enhance their relevance to contemporary youth work.

Background

In the two decades between the late 1970s and the late 1990s, several systematic attempts were made to develop schematic conceptual 'models' of youth work. Commitment to theory discussion has continued within academia in the twenty-first century, (for example Batsleer and Davies, 2010; Bessant, 2004; Bowie, 2004; Corney, 2006; Jeffs and Smith, 2005; Martin, 2002; Sercombe, 2007; Smith, 2005). However, recent theory development has either focussed upon single issues or single approaches, or on issues concerned with professionalization, rather the more encompassing

projects of the late twentieth century. Simultaneously, conference discussions indicate that youth work practitioners have reverted to a-theoretical practice-oriented descriptions when faced with new policy environments. Both theoretical and policy driven changes have contributed to this retreat from theory and caused the relevance of older models to be questioned. Had a Framework for Positive Sceptical Reflection been applied, these changes might have led to a flowering of dialogue, extension of theory, recognition of the competing and often contradictory discourses about young people, social relationship and social issues, and might have supported soundly-based practice innovations.

Policy driven changes that challenged the relevance of previous models occurred as governments in both England and in Australia re-shaped political and institutional structures and practices that defined youth work. In Australia, this occurred during the 1990s, when competitive tendering replaced allocated funding for youth work provision. This arrangement required youth organisations to compete with each other, and to demonstrate achievement of externally imposed targets and outcomes. As a consequence, and as a survival strategy, some youth organisations diversified their services beyond the traditional boundaries of youth work. In England, structural re-organisation of youth work occurred under New Labour when youth services in many boroughs and counties were incorporated into Children's and Young People's Services, Connexions, and Integrated Youth Support Services. These policy directions served to blur boundaries between youth work and other professions and to undermine youth workers' occupational identity by weakening the tie to employment conditions defined by the Joint Negotiating Committee for Youth Leaders and Community Centre Wardens (JNC). More recently, further weakening of youth services has occurred in Britain since the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition took government. The coalition government has imposed substantial funding reductions and reorganisation of services, and has implemented its 'Big Society' policy initiatives, which has continued use of externally imposed targets first introduced by New Labour.

Within the academy, theoretical debates within sociology challenged the assumptions of some previous youth work models. These debates emanated from the critiques of structuralist sociological perspectives, especially Marxian sociology, the rise of post-structuralist perspectives, and the on-going theoretical struggles within the discipline. Many of the late twentieth century models of youth work were implicitly or explicitly grounded in Marxian structuralist sociological perspectives or analysis. The rise of post-structuralism in sociology meant that the underlying assumptions of the models became less fashionable and more contested. Youth work theorists have been divided in their response to how the insights of post-structuralism relate to youth work theory.

BIYW youth work occurs in post-colonial countries where English youth work education and training has been exported, either formally or informally and where youth work operates within Westminster-style institutional structures. Potentially this includes countries such as Wales,

Scotland, Northern Ireland, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Malta, and some other countries where the Commonwealth Youth Development Programme operates. In the next section of this article, examples are drawn from England, Ireland and Australia.

Youth Work Models

This section provides a brief overview of four BIYW models that were developed during the two decades between the mid-1970s and the mid-1990s, before the theoretical and policy changes discussed above had occurred. The models have been selected because they attempted to theorise about the whole youth work field rather than present a singular model of practice, and because each model has been influential in at least one country. The models were developed for different purposes, use different organising principles, and have different theoretical bases. Very short outlines of each model are provided because some models are not well-known outside their country of origin, and some of the original publications are no longer easily accessible. In every case, because of requirements for brevity, some details and features have been omitted from this outline. References are included so interested readers can refer to the original publications, where these are still available. Most summaries presented here stay close to the language used in the original publication, but in some instances language has been changed to enhance clarity. For example, Butters and Newell describe 'critical breaks' between historic eras. This article uses the term 'epistemic break' derived from Kuhn (1970), to avoid confusion with the other meanings of 'critical' used within this and other models.

The organisation of this section is by country of origin. The UK section includes models by Butters and Newell (1978), and Smith (1988). Within the time period covered in this article, others added to this tradition using similar organising principles to Smith. However, to maintain the focus of the article, extensions to basic models will not be discussed separately. The Irish section includes a model developed by Hurley and Treacy (1993) and the Australian section includes a model developed by Cooper and White (1994). The overview of each model summarises its stated purpose, organising principles, main argument and principle features.

Two UK models

The two UK models form a sequence, with Smith's work responding to critiques or gaps in Butters and Newell's earlier work. Butters and Newell's (1978) model of youth work was presented in a review entitled *Realities of Training*. This model was critiqued in the decade following its publication (Leigh and Smart, 1985; Smith, 1988) and is included because it was almost certainly known to the writers of later models, even where not explicitly cited as a reference. This model and its critiques have also influenced the language, structure and focus of subsequent work.

The purpose of the *Realities of Training* review was to inform development of training provision for part-time workers and volunteers in England and Wales. To complete this task, Butters and Newell devised a model of youth work using history and epistemology as an organising principle. Their model suggested that the history, present and future of youth work could be characterised by three main linear, historical epochs. They argued that these epochs had clear epistemic breaks between them. During the first epoch of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century they claimed that youth work was motivated by concern for social integration, and they described the dominant strategy used as Character Building. This term became the model-nomenclature for youth work of this epoch. The second (then, contemporary) period, Butters and Newell called the Social Education Repertoire (SER) stage of development. The third (then, future) epoch they argued would occur when social analysis became based upon critical sociology and its main strategy would be Self-Emancipation. For some reason, this last strategy is usually referred to as the Radical Paradigm, rather than by the name of its strategy.

The main features of Butters and Newell's model were elaborated in their discussion of the SER and the Radical Paradigm. Within the SER epoch they distinguished between three approaches to youth work. They argued that these 'strands' were similar because they each used a form of social education, but differed in their strategies and goals for social education. Butters and Newell contended that each approach used a different theoretical analysis of the central problems facing society, and used different strategies to achieve their ends. Thus, they argued that analysis informed by *cultural pluralism* resulted in strategy focussed upon Cultural Adjustment. Analysis informed by *structural functionalism*, they argued, resulted in adoption of strategies based upon Community Development. They contended that analysis informed by *conflict theory* resulted in strategies focussed upon Institutional Reform. As in the first epoch, each strand within the SER has become known by the nomenclature Butters and Newell provided for the strategy: Cultural Adjustment; Community Development; and, Institutional Reform. Table 1 shows a simplified overview of Butters and Newell's (1978) main model of youth work, and illustrates the links between analytical frameworks, strategies and methods. In their discussion of the Radical Paradigm, which they believed would displace SER as the future basis of youth work, they explicitly linked youth work practice to the methods of critical pedagogy developed by Freire (1972), still being developed by Giroux (2011), and to theory development in radical social work, especially the work of Leonard (1975). These links have influenced subsequent theory in youth work.

In 1988, in *Developing Youth Work*, Smith presented an alternative model of youth work. Smith developed the model to address deficiencies he and others had identified with Butters and Newell's model which Leigh and Smart (1985) argued was insufficiently related to practice and overly intellectualized. Smith also contended that Butters and Newell's model omitted important traditional areas of youth work practice (1988: 50).

Table 1: Structure of Social Education Repertoire (SER) and historical adjuncts (adapted from Butters and Newell (1978: 39).

Historical tendency	Analysis	Strategy	Method	Training model
1870–1919 (liberal incorporation)	Social integration	**Character building**	Role model	Transmissive
Critical (epistemic?) break to enter SER				
1930–1970 (progressive education)	Cultural pluralism	**Cultural adjustment**	Non-directive enbling	Interpretivist
1960–1970 (advanced progressive education)	Structural functionalism	**Community Development**	Enabling in local community	Interpretivist/ constructivist
1890–1970 (social democracy)	Interest Group Conflict Theory	**Institutional reform**	Rights and mobilisation	Transmissive/ constructivist
Epistemic break to escape SER				
Future (radical paradigm)	Critical sociology	**Self-emancipation**	Critical pedagogy	Transgressive

Smith's stated purpose for his model was to define youth work by developing 'a system for the naming of the different strands of youth work practice and thinking which reflect the experiences of workers' (Smith, 1988: 63). As an organising principle for his model, he used the traditions recognised by practitioners. His main argument was that using recognised traditions within youth work ensured that his model reflected practice. Smith asserted that the traditions he identified had different primary purposes and made different assumptions about the needs of young people and their position in society. Thus, he argued that similar practice methods (like social education) are often used within different traditions for different purposes. He contended that it was important to avoid categories that would draw artificial distinctions between traditions where these did not reflect the actual nature of practice.

Smith's model made a primary distinction between *professionalised* youth work and *movement-based* youth work. Within movement-based youth work, he made a further distinction between movement-based social and leisure provision, (where social and leisure participation constituted the primary purpose of the work), and other forms of movement-based youth work, such as organisations concerned with character building (the uniformed organisations) and politicising organisations (where social and leisure activities are used as a means to achieve other purposes).

In addition to this, Smith correctly argued that Butters and Newell had omitted welfare traditions from their model (Butters and Newell discuss welfare within the text of their work, but it does not form an explicit part of their model). To build a comprehensive model of youth work, Smith included 'welfaring' in the professionalised domain, and 'rescuing' within the movement based domain. Reflecting later on his own model, Smith (2001) states that in its original form it does not adequately include church-based youth work. He suggests that this could be remedied either by extending the politicizing tradition, or by adding an additional box concerned with religious conversion or formation. Smith identified another important difference between his model and that of Butters and Newell, when he asserted that there had been no epistemic break between pre-SER youth work and SER youth work, because character building formed an important contemporary component of uniformed movement-based youth work. A diagram of Smith's 1988 model, modified to include changes he suggested in 2001, is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Traditions in Youth Work, adapted from Smith (1988, 2001)
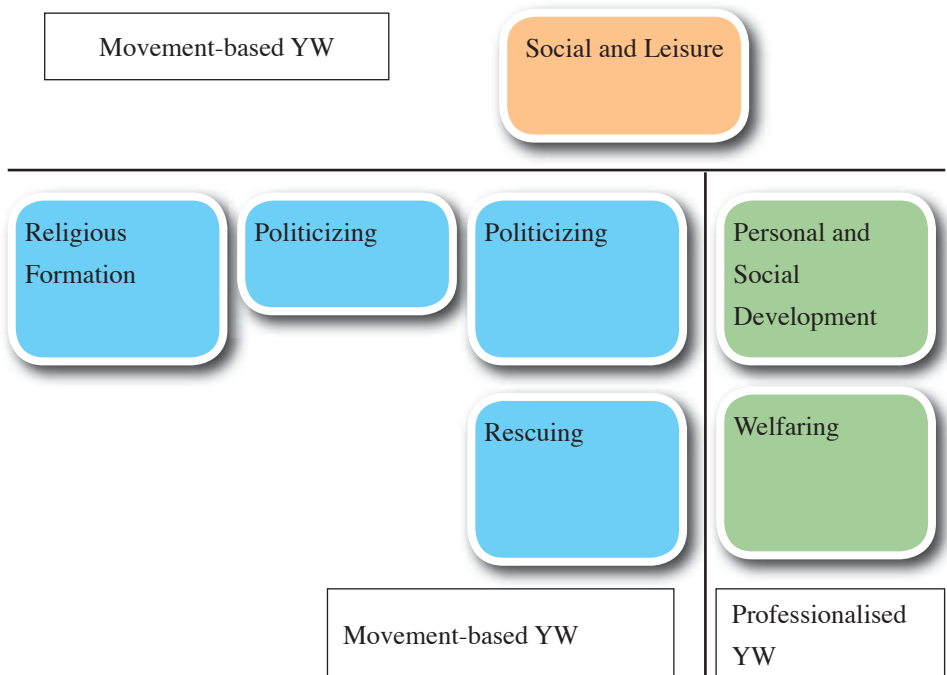
An Irish model

In 1993, the Irish Youth Work Press published a book by Hurley and Treacy entitled *Models of Youth Work – a sociological framework*. The stated purpose of their model(s) was to provide a theoretical framework to guide youth work practice, (1993: ii). As an organising principle for their model, Hurley and Treacy used a sociological framework originally developed by Burrell and Morgan (1979). In Ireland, youth work is structurally allied to education, and discussion within this model begins with a sociological exploration of the role and practice of education from each sociological perspective that informs their model. Their main argument is that very different forms of youth work developed from differing modes of social analysis by practitioners, and that these forms still co-exist.

In their full explanation of their model, Hurley and Treacy elucidate the ideological dimensions of each approach, how each approach analyses young people's needs, and implications of each approach for programmes in areas of life – skills education, recreation, political education, vocational training, and arts and creativity. They also draw out the practical implications of each approach for the youth work role and processes, for relationship with young people, for how participation should be structured, and for intended outcomes for young people and society. Hurley and Treacy's model is summarised in Figure 2. For a full account, the interested reader should refer back to the original publication, if it is still available. The model is well-known in Ireland, but not widely known elsewhere.

Figure 2: A schematic summary of the major features of Hurley and Treacy's (1993) Models of Youth Work – a sociological framework. This diagram incorporates elements of their summary on p.60, plus features from other Tables within the text

	Sociology of Radical Change		
Subjectivist	**Critical Social Education** (Radical Humanist) YW as animateur, enabler, consciousness-raiser, critical social analyst **Reformist** YP have ability to analyse and assess alternatives … and to act to change their world if they choose **Programme: explore personal experience as basis for consciousness raising**	**Radical Social Change** (Radical structuralist) YW as radical activist **Revolutionary** YP gain skills needed to act for social transformation **Programme: Indoctrination of young people into revolutionary perspective; rejection of social institutions as oppressive**	**Objectivist**
	Personal Development (Interpretivist) YW as Counsellor, supporter group worker **Liberal** YP prepared for active role in society, respect themselves and develop ability to build and maintain relationship **Programme: Personal responsibility for choices; leadership; good skills for mixing socially**	**Character Building** (Functionalist) YW as role model and organiser **Conservative** YP develop discipline **Programme: focus energies in constructive way; healthy lifestyles**	
	Sociology of Regulation		

An Australian model

In 1994, *Youth Studies Australia* published an article on Models of Youth Work Intervention by Cooper and White (1994). The stated purpose of the model(s) was to *'clarify the different orientations and practices associated with different kinds of youth work activity'* (1994: 30). Six different models (or approaches) were presented and brought together through the organising principle of political ideology. The nomenclature used to describe each approach relates to the nature of the intervention. The main argument, implicit within this overall model, is that different political ideologies, worldviews and values spawn very different forms of youth work, and that these different forms continue to develop and co-exist. Structurally, this argument parallels the argument proposed by Hurley and Treacy about social analysis, and is consistent with Smith's analysis.

The six approaches discussed are *Treatment, Reform, Non-radical Advocacy, Radical Advocacy, Non-radical Empowerment*, and *Radical Empowerment*. Each approach is discussed in terms of its political ideological foundations, how it constructs young people's problems, its perspective on society, assumptions about human nature, core values of the approach, motivation for intervention, types of intervention, skills required of workers, and disciplines that inform practice. The model explicitly refers to the language used to describe young people and relates this to political ideological perspectives and assumptions about human nature. The focus on language highlights two aspects not discussed in other models. Firstly, similar language is used to describe some quite different forms of intervention, see for example Radical Empowerment vs. Non-radical Empowerment, and Radical Advocacy vs. Non-radical Advocacy. Secondly, the focus on language provides a useful quick method to identify underlying values within new policy initiatives. Table 2 captures the main features of this model and the interested reader should refer back to the original journal article for a fuller account. The model is well-known in Australia, but not elsewhere.

Table 2: Models of Youth Work Intervention: an abridged summary from Cooper and White (1994)

Name	Political tradition	Human nature	Vision/Goals	Values	Language
Treatment	*Conservative*	*Negative*	*Social Harmony*	*Social cohesion*	*Deviancy, inadequacy*
Reform	Liberal	Reformable	Social mobility	Equal opportunity	Disadvantage, poor social environment
Advocacy (non-radical)	Liberal, Social democratic	Reformable	Social contract, individual rights	Rights as due under existing law	Rights, social justice
Advocacy (radical)	Social democratic socialism	Positive	Gradual social change towards more just and equitable society	Social justice, positive rights Law reform to extend rights	Rights, social justice
Empowerment (non-radical)	Classical liberal/ neo-conservative	Neutral or negative	Small government	Freedom from interference	Empowerment, enfranchisement
Empowerment (radical)	anarchist	Highly positive	Self-government, grassroots democracy	Equality of social power	Empowerment consciousness-raising, enfranchisement

This concludes the summary of existing models. The next section builds a Framework for Positive Sceptical Reflection that will be used to assess these models.

Framework for Positive Sceptical Reflection

The Framework for Positive Sceptical Reflection builds upon the work of two theorists; Davies (2006), who argues for the value of doubt in youth work and the on-going need for reflective practice, and Sterman (1991) who, in the context of computer modelling, discusses the nature of models and suggests appropriate criteria for assessment of models. The proposed framework is 'positive' in the sense that its purpose is to provide a method to improve youth work models through critique, rather than to provide critique alone. The framework is 'sceptical' because it rigorously questions assumptions made within models, making use of methods derived from Sterman (1991).

Davies (2006) argues that doubt and scepticism have a positive role in the development of youth work theory and practice, and connects this with the need for reflection on practice. The framework is 'reflective', because reflection enables both practitioners and theorists to deepen their understanding of youth work. The sceptical youth worker uses reflection to become aware of contradictions and inconsistencies, and to identify their own worldview, tacit beliefs and assumptions. Davies argues that, 'Ultimately 'practice'– youth work practice no more or less than any other – is delivered by and through the subjectivity of the human being. That subjectivity certainly needs to be checked and balanced by disciplined reflection and self-reflection' (2006: 71).

What are the functions and purposes of models? What kinds of truth claims do they make? Sterman argues that the purpose of any model is to simplify a complex state of affairs to make it more comprehensible for the intended purpose. The function of a model is to *usefully* guide decision-making related to a nominated purpose. Models do not make truth claims about how the world is because, as Sterman (1991) asserts, all models are (ultimately) wrong, by virtue of their role. To explain his position, Sterman (1991) uses the analogy of a map as a model of a terrain. A good map-maker does not attempt to include every detail of the terrain; otherwise the map would be too large and too complicated to be useful. To extend that analogy, maps have different purposes. For example, a useful map for a motorist must include features of use to motorists (like road type, roundabouts, one-way streets, and traffic lights) because motorists need this information. A useful map for hikers would include different information (like topological information, steepness of hills, trees, whether the terrain is difficult to cross on foot, legal rights of way; it would generally need to be more detailed and to be of a larger scale). A motorist's map and a walker's map of the same area do not look the same. Neither map provides a completely 'truthful' picture of the landscape. Maps look nothing like photographs, which are also not completely accurate pictures of a landscape.

Hence, Sterman argues, models, like maps, should be judged according to their *utility*, or fitness for purpose. Within any model, there is always a tension between comprehensiveness and comprehensibility. A good model should be sufficiently comprehensive for its purpose, without being unnecessarily over-complicated. Model-making, therefore is an art, rather than a science, because it requires judgement about what to include and what to exclude, to ensure that the model is both easy to understand, and useful for its intended purpose. In addition to understanding its purpose and function, the foundational assumptions and claims of any model should be made available for scrutiny and should be defensible. Sterman argues that model-makers should explicitly state all their assumptions, to enable others to audit the model making process, although he acknowledges this rarely occurs. Sterman (1991) argues that model-makers should document not only the theoretical assumptions that inform a model, but also their tacit 'worldview' that is implicit in the model, their assumptions that guided decisions about what to omit, and their decisions about methods for model development.

Following this analogy, it is not simply a question of asking whether a model is true or false. The primary measure of success for models of youth work should be whether the particular model of youth work is useful for its intended purpose. A useful model of youth work should be based upon justifiable decisions about how to organise information to ensure that the model includes all that is essential to the purpose of the model. For clarity, the model should exclude all information about youth work that is not relevant to the purpose of the model. The organising principle used to structure information in the model is very important because it determines what is included and excluded, and shapes the most important model assumptions. The Framework for Positive Sceptical Reflection presents these considerations in tabular form, see Table 3.

Table 3 Framework for Sceptical Reflection on Models of Youth Work

Key concept	Question	Sub-question	Sub-question	Sub-question
Model Purpose(s)	What are the purposes of the model of youth work?	Is the model useful for its intended purpose?	Is this purpose (still) relevant?	
Organising principle(s) for the model	What theoretical principle as used to organise information in the model?	What discipline(s) inform organising porinciple?	Is the principle defensible?	What key assumptions/ worldview are implicit in the organising principle?
As above, continued		How did organising principle influence what was given prominence in the model?	How did this influence what details were excluded from the model?	
Methods of Model Building	What methods did the model maker use to build the model?	What assumptions did the model maker make about the relationship between theory and practice?		

To summarise, to judge the utility of any model it is necessary to know the purpose of the model and to scrutinise assumptions made by the model-maker when they constructed the model, including organising principles and methods used to develop the model.

Discussion

The Framework for Positive Sceptical Reflection will now be used to determine the utility and relevance of the four selected models for contemporary BIYW. Discussion will focus on: model purpose, central organising principle of each model, and model-making methods including the relationship between theory and practice in each model.

Purposes of models

The models presented in this paper were developed for different primary purposes. In most cases, the authors' discussion indicates both primary and secondary purposes for their model. Purposes of the models examined can classified into five types: 1) models primarily concerned with naming and describing youth work practice, 2) models primarily concerned with providing a basis for youth work education and training, 3) models primarily concerned with providing a theoretical foundation for youth work by linking youth work practice with bodies of theory in other disciplines, 4) models of youth work that have a policy orientation, and finally, 5) models of youth work that are primarily concerned with issues of occupational demarcation between youth work and other educational and social welfare occupations. The primary and secondary purposes of the four models are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4: Purpose of model of youth work

Purpose/author	Butters and Newell	Smith	Hurley and Treacy	Cooper and White
Naming/explaining	Secondary	Primary	Primary	Primary
Training/education	Primary		Secondary	
Theory/disciplines	Secondary		Primary	Primary
Occupational Boundaries	Secondary	Secondary		
Policy Oriented		Secondary	Secondary	Secondary

All primary and secondary purposes of these models are still relevant to contemporary youth work. In accordance with Sterman's contention that models should be developed for particular purposes, the implication is that contemporary youth work will require different models for different purposes.

Organising principles

Each model is shaped by a different central organising principle, as shown in Table 5. This principle shapes decisions about how to relate theory and practice, determines the focus of the model, informs decisions about what to include and exclude, and about which disciplinary base to privilege.

Table 5: Organising principles of models

	Butters and Newell	Smith	Hurley and Treacy	Cooper and White
Organising principle	Sociological analysis (Teleological Historicism)	Contemporary traditions within the field (UK)	Sociological: (Burrell and Morgan)	Political ideologies: Multi-lens
Disciplinary base	Sociology/History	History/ Education	Multi-lens Sociology/ Education	Politics/ Philosophy

Two model-makers, Butters and Newell (1978) and Hurley and Treacy (1993), use explicit sociological frameworks. Butters and Newell discussed multiple sociological perspectives but implicitly assumed a linear historical progression (or teleological historicism) in their model. Teleological historicism is discredited practically (Smith, 1988), who argued that the historical account of practice was inaccurate, and also as a social theory. The theoretical objections are epistemological and come from both post-positive perspectives, and post-structuralist perspectives. In brief, post-positives, such as Popper (1957), argued that historicism was not a genuine social theory because it was compatible with all possible circumstances, was not falsifiable, and therefore had no predictive power. Post-structuralists such as Foucault (1989) argued that discourses in social sciences are inexorably shaped by dominant power relationships, however, unlike structuralists, Foucault claims that theories are socially embedded and any search for truth based in totalising 'grand theory' of any variety is a mistaken and futile endeavour. According to Foucault's argument it is simply not possible to 'step outside' the intellectual stream of the time. He argues that discourses change and develop, but in the end, a discourse is always a discourse, and hence always partial, and situated in the assumptions of the epoch. According to this argument, teleological historicism is an example of such a discourse. Because of practical and theoretical objections taken together, the central organising principle of this model seems to be invalid, and the model is not suitable for future development.

Hurley and Treacy use Burrell and Morgan's (1979) sociological framework as the basis for

their model. Sociology as a discipline has developed considerably since 1979. Within Burrell and Morgan's framework, the radical humanist perspective is able to incorporate some of the developments within sociology, including post-Marxist critical sociology and the critical postmodern approach advocated by Alvesson (2002). However, it does not create a space for other forms of post-modern sociology, or for Giddens' (1987) structuration theory, or Foucaldian post-modern sociologists who reject totalising models because they are discursive, as discussed previously.

Setting aside this last objection, a multi-lens sociological approach (and even possibly a modified form of Burrell and Morgan's framework) provides a defensible central organising principle for future youth work models, whose purpose is to tease out and contrast the implications for youth work of different approaches to social analysis. However, the sociological basis of any future model of youth work would need to be re-worked to include more recent sociological developments. Alternatively, a model could be developed from a named set of sociological perspectives, without the implication that it included all perspectives. Because Hurley and Treacy also linked their model to observed practice, their accounts of practice would need to be updated to reflect current practices within the youth field.

Smith's central organising principle was based upon observations of contemporary traditions in the youth field. As a central organising principle, the use of practitioner identified traditions is defensible for its primary purpose, which was naming. However, changes in the composition of the youth field since 1988 and international application of the model would require review of the categories within the model to ensure contemporary relevance. Smith suggested modifications to the original model in 2001, as discussed, and subsequently used the same approach as a basis for critique of new forms of youth work that emerged in the UK in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century (Smith, 2003).

Cooper and White's central organising principle was political ideology. This sub-discipline straddles the boundary between politics and philosophy. The discipline characterises and analyses the values and worldviews of different political traditions and their implications for youth policy direction. Some new political perspectives have become more prominent since the early 1990s, especially the so-called 'cross-cutting' perspectives, such as environmentalism or green politics, which transcend previously accepted political boundaries (Heywood, 2003). However, unlike sociology, political ideology as a sub-discipline has not changed fundamentally in the past two decades. This approach to political ideology is therefore defensible in terms of the purpose of the intended model, and still provides a useful central organising principle for future youth work models. The categories may need to be revised to reflect contemporary political configurations such as the emergence of new political perspectives, including those within established political traditions. As noted with other models, because Cooper and White's model was linked to observed

Australian practice, their accounts of practice would need to be updated to reflect present-day Australian and international practice within the youth work field.

Methods

An overview of the four models shows an interesting divide in the method used to relate theory to practice within models. All models assume that there is a relationship between theory and practice, and both Smith, and Butters and Newell claim that their models are directly grounded in observations about practice. Smith began from historical and contemporary descriptions of practice, but Butters and Newell do not explain exactly how their model was derived from their interview data. From their discussion of their model, it appears Butters and Newell took their theoretical perspective as the starting point for their model and then organised their data with reference to the theory. Both Hurley and Treacy and Cooper and White began with an explicit theoretical lens through which to observe practice, and hence these models developed from theory to practice (see Table 6).

Table 6: Theory and practice

	Butters and Newell	Smith	Hurley and Treacy	Cooper and White
Theory driven **Primary**	Analysis privileges single perspective, data fitted to theory	No observations used to develop taxonomy	Multiple perspectives approach	Multiple perspectives approach
practice lens	Intervention Strategies	Traditions recognisable by practitioners	Youth work purpose, strategy and methods	Intervention Purpose and Strategies

Three main methods were used by the authors to locate practice within their models. These were historical and documentary, especially the use of historical and contemporary accounts to create a taxonomy, reflection on multiple theoretical perspectives to interpret informal observations of contemporary practice, and in a single case, interview data analysed from a single, pre-determined theoretical perspective (see Table 7). Only Butters and Newell used interview data to develop their model; however, as discussed above, it appears that the data was placed into a pre-existing framework, rather than being used as a grounded theory approach. This is evidenced in Butters and Newell's description of practice, where they privilege the Radical Paradigm, even though it was least represented in their empirical data. It might be argued that Butters and Newell's radical paradigm was future oriented, and therefore not likely to be well-represented empirically. If this is the case, Butters and Newell must acknowledge that their work is essentially theoretical (with illustrative case studies) rather than empirically-based. A second problem is that with the benefit

of hindsight, in the thirty years since *Realities of Training* first appeared, the radical paradigm has not emerged as a visible form of practice in contemporary youth work.

Table 7: Model-making methods

	Butters and Newell	Smith	Hurley and Treacy	Cooper and White
Historical/ documentary	Marxian historical method	Descriptive/ Conceptual historical	a-historical	a-historical
Reflective process	Implicit	Explicit	Explicit	Explicit
Empirical data	Yes	No	No	No

Reclaiming Positive Scepticism

As in previous decades, youth work remains ambiguously positioned as an institution that variously supports social conformity, affirms and extends young people's rights, promotes holistic human development and transcendent search for meaning, and works practically and politically toward a more just and humane society. The youth work models reviewed in this article, were developed in response to different facets of the social and political context of their time. The policy environment has now changed.

Application of the Framework for Positive Sceptical Reflection indicates that the central organising principle within three of the models has some contemporary utility. With some reworking, all except Butters and Newell's model, could provide analytical tools that youth work still needs. Smith's method of mapping traditions is useful to identify how contemporary forms of practice fit with previous traditions. In his subsequent work, Smith has demonstrated how his basic model can provide a foundation for analysis of emergent forms of youth work, for example, Smith (2003). The sociological analysis that underpins Hurley and Treacy's model needs updating, but this approach still provides essential insights into how assumptions and public discourse about society, in a very practical way, shape the purposes of youth work and discourse about the role of youth work in society. Finally, Cooper and White's approach, which links political ideology and youth work practice, still provides a useful method to understand how political worldviews shape government policy, and how this in turn, shapes the space in which youth work operates. This understanding provides a number of benefits. It allows youth workers to communicate with politicians in ways pertinent to the politicians' worldview. It also enables youth workers to infer the values behind new government policies, like the 'Big Society', and to quickly analyse the likely implications for youth work. Such knowledge is also essential for effective public education and political lobbying to create a public understanding of why youth work is necessary and what it can achieve. The attention to language in this model also links to discourse analysis, and promotes an understanding

of how discourse informs claims to legitimacy in youth work practice.

The Way Forward

An important purpose of this article has been to renew interest in the theorisation of youth work and to re-start discussion about models of youth work. The Framework for Positive Sceptical Reflection was used to evaluate four existing models, and has identified areas of research and investigation that are needed for future development of youth work models. To update and improve existing models, there is an urgent need for good quality systematically gathered data about practices of contemporary youth work, including strategies, values and processes.

In this investigation, it has become clear that even within BIYW countries, theoretical development has been insular, despite technological changes that ease the sharing of research. More international collaboration is needed to document, understand and share insights into the development of BIYW. One starting point would be through greater international collaboration between youth work research centres and clearinghouses. More ambitiously, international collaboration on empirical investigation of current youth work practice, nationally and internationally, in BIYW countries and beyond, would assist model development. This could be used to map how practice has changed and to understand youth workers' perceptions of these changes. A pilot project recently completed by the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (Griffin and Lutterall, 2011) began this process in a small way in Australia, but further work is required. A high quality study would require development of a rigorous grounded theory methodology, which could be used to systematically extract themes from collected data, and to develop youth work theory.

International collaboration beyond the traditional BIYW countries would be beneficial because it would enable a better understanding of alternative potential forms youth work might (legitimately) take. Such collaboration might include not only European youth work, through the Council of Europe (European Youth Forum, 2008), but also youth work in the United States, through the Next Generation Youth Work Coalition, in Asia, including Singapore, through Youthwork Singapore, and youth work in Hong Kong, and in Africa, especially South Africa.

Secondly, conceptual investigation could re-examine the usefulness and applicability of established descriptors within youth work models. The descriptors coined by Butters and Newell have been used relatively uncritically in many subsequent models of practice. This is not always helpful. For example, in youth work the term 'Character Building' is generally used pejoratively to describe strategies of social indoctrination to produce conservative social conformity. This usage is peculiar to the youth work field, and would not be understood in other disciplines. For example, in some parts of education influenced by virtue ethics, character building is understood very differently.

The youth work usage of Character Building is also problematic because it aligns the strategy of socialisation/ social indoctrination, which can be used within any system of political values (conservative, liberal, socialist, environmentalist or feminist) with a singular (conservative) set of political values. This confounds the strategy, with its purpose, and makes it unclear whether the objection is to the method (socialisation, social indoctrination) or the outcome (social conformity), or to both.

Thirdly, in some countries, work is still needed to examine and articulate boundaries between youth work and other professions, especially as boundaries have become more fluid. Model-development provides a method to delineate the place youth work occupies within an array of social, educational, community, health, welfare, psychological, political, religious, and leisure services and provision. The diagram produced by Wylie (2006, cited in McKee, et al, 2010) provides a useful starting point.

Finally, there is an urgent need for models to promote on-going debate about the curriculum for youth work education and training. The motivation for Butters and Newell to develop their model of youth work was inspired by this need, even though their model was not ultimately successful. Other models (Smith; Hurley and Treacy; Cooper and White) addressed training as a secondary purpose of their model and touch upon the knowledge and skills youth workers require for different types of work. However, this is only part of the picture, because the future curriculum for youth work education and training will need to be able to defend its curriculum purposes, content and its processes, as Ord (2008) argues, and these do not fit easily with prevailing Vocational and Higher education policy. To address the need for a renewed curriculum in youth work higher education the Australian Learning and Teaching Council recently funded a comprehensive review and renewal of the Australian youth work higher education curriculum, which is currently in progress (Cooper et al, 2010).

In conclusion, this article has identified how youth work models can contribute to the future development of youth work in the twenty-first century, and which of the older models provide a useful starting point for future development. Existing models need updating urgently, and multiple models will be required. The next step is for youth workers in all roles to re-engage with systematic observation of their own practice, with critical reflection, and with thoughtful reading in a range of disciplines to give life to new models. Such processes will develop and re-invigorate both practice methods and models, and will enable the relevance of youth work to be maintained and communicated. If this occurs, youth work may survive, and even thrive, as a useful and distinct form of practice in the twenty-first century.

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