

DEFINING the Learning Context



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The material this flyer is based on is from **FOCUS learning**, Chapter 1 - 'Exploring Learning in Youth Work'

Youth work belongs to the domain of 'out-of-school education', most commonly referred to as either non-formal or informal learning'

Lauritzen, (2019)

NON-FORMAL LEARNING

'...is a purposive, but voluntary, learning that takes place in a diverse range of environments and situations for which teaching/training and learning is not necessarily their sole or main activity. These environments and situations may be intermittent or transitory, and the activities or courses that take place may be staffed by professional learning facilitators (such as youth trainers) or by volunteers (such as youth leaders). The activities and courses are planned, but are seldom structured by conventional rhythms or curriculum subjects...¹

INFORMAL LEARNING

'..., from the learner's standpoint at least, is non-purposive learning, which takes place in everyday life contexts in the family, at work, during leisure and in the community. It does have outcomes, but these are seldom recorded, virtually never certified and are typically neither immediately visible for the learner nor do they count in themselves for education, training or employment purposes...²

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

Youth work is approached from diverse perspectives, by different people, cultures, countries and traditions, where young people can be seen as...

I ...CREATORS NOT CONSUMERS.
Developing a young persons understanding of their own and others' power and control.³ Encouraging participation, engagement and exploration by the young people.

II ...ACTIVISTS.
An emancipatory approach sees the potential for youth led resistance. Realisation depends on the ideology, pedagogy and values informing the youth work practice, and how different types of learning, relationships, and participation are conceptualised.

Youth work is also based on...

III ...DIVERSE UNDERSTANDING OF YOUTH WORK PRINCIPLES, VALUES AND MODELS.
Cultural and historical experiences and interpretations have to be acknowledged. It is necessary to have awareness of this diversity, so that implemented approaches and practices are well informed and carefully considered.

IV ...EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING.
Youth work is a transformative experience that can change a young person's relationship with the world, providing them with a new way of seeing and being in the world.⁴ It prompts a reformulation of meaning, opens up new perspectives and supports the reshaping of beliefs.



THE YOUNG PERSON AS A LEARNER

- The learner is encouraged to use critical thinking and questioning to consider if their underlying assumptions and beliefs about the world are accurate.
- Group participation and active learning is encouraged so that learners can engage in dialogue and allow different experiences to shape their perspectives and worldviews.
- Learners are also supported to take action for change that contributes to a more inclusive, just and sustainable world.

¹ Chisholm, L (2005) EU-CoE Youth Partnership. Glossary. <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/glossary>.

³ Sapin, K. (2013). Essential Skills for Youth Work Practice. 2nd Edition. Sage Publications Ltd. p9.

⁴ Dewey, J. (1934). Art as Experience. New York. Penguin Group.

LEARNING IN YOUTH WORK



IS BASED ON

non-formal learning principles, therefore it is...:

- a planned learning process (based on needs and interests of young people).
- aimed at the personal, social and political development of young people.
- designed to improve a range of skills and competences.
- outside but supplementary to the formal educational curriculum.
- based on voluntary participation.
- conducted by trained leaders

DRAWS ON

a range of disciplines and has its roots in the various classical educational philosophies and thinking, these include:

- Critical Social Theory
- Social Pedagogy
- Education for Critical Consciousness
- Critical Pedagogy
- Critical Feminist Education

IS ABOUT

- the process and the engagement of the young person into a learning experience by action.
- the young person choosing to engage in an experience where learning can become an outcome.

Youth work can be very diverse in how it is understood and delivered in different countries. There are different approaches that are underpinned by different values and worldviews.

participation skills

different points of view and possibilities
experience doing
learners contributing to the direction of learning

valuable information trying
pleasure fun
others IT IS ALSO ABOUT⁶

freedom games

a freedom of choice an easy way to learn
creativity learning
everything is possible
spontaneous learning activities

Learning in youth work **responds** to young people's **learning needs** and also in **promoting** the **importance of democracy**, **critical thinking** and **active citizenship**, especially in the face of increasingly concerning challenges that society faces.

*'What's important is not only learning youth work theory but putting it into practice.'*⁷

Praxis is informed action, in the context of youth work, it is a practice that is informed by experience, theory, and knowledge of policy.

One of the intentions of youth work is to create a space for young people to reflect on the world they live in and take action for change. For the youth worker it is critically relevant to deepen their understanding of youth work theory and to design an appropriate educational model.

^{5/6}Klocker, S. Ed. (2009). Manual for facilitators in Non Formal Education. Strasbourg. Council of Europe Publishing. p24.

⁷Pepper, S. (2012). Youth Workin' It. What is youth work praxis? <http://youthworkinit.com/what-is-youth-work-praxis/>.