

Reimagining Practicum in Twenty-First Century Child and Youth Care

by

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A Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the School of Child and Youth Care
University of Victoria

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Abstract

Practicum is widely acknowledged by undergraduate students, instructors, and practicum site supervisors as key in the education of child and youth care (CYC) students, providing opportunities for students to consolidate knowledge and skills through practice and critical reflection. Tensions permeating CYC practicum, however, include logistical challenges, perceived gaps between coursework and practice, and concerns that practicum is depoliticized. There is a need to rethink CYC practicum for the 21st century, focusing on new possibilities for liveliness and generativity. The present project contributes to the CYC field by producing two documents for the University of Victoria (UVic) School of Child and Youth Care (SCYC): (1) a literature review focusing on peer-reviewed and scholarly research on practicum, “communities of practice,” and innovative conceptualizations of practicum, and (2) a “practicum working document” that builds on exemplars of innovative conceptualizations to provide suggestions for reimagining the University of Victoria CYC practicum. In addition to drawing on reviewed literature, this project is informed by discussions that took place within the UVic SCYC Practicum Council.

Keywords: practicum, child and youth care, fieldwork, field education,
communities of practice

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Acknowledgements

This proposal is written with respect and acknowledgement of the Lkwungen, WS'ANEC', and Wyomilth peoples of the Coast Salish Nation, on whose unceded ancestral and traditional territory I have the privilege, as a settler, of working, living, and studying. I give great thanks to the generous hosts of this land.

Thank you to my children, Devin, Michaela and Nikolas for encouraging me to return to school and helping to carry me through to the other side. Your support has meant the world to me. With my MA behind me I owe you many homemade meals, belated birthday celebrations, and likely a few loads of laundry.

I am blessed with wonderful family and friends who have stuck by me through the past four years of grad school. Thank you for hugs, wine, therapeutic walks through the forest, listening to my angst, making me laugh, and expressing interest in my project.

Thank you to my incredible CYC classmates for sharing your rich experiences and sage perspectives in our discussions. You opened my eyes to new ways of viewing children, youth, families and practice. I am very grateful for your friendship and humour.

I give great thanks to my supportive committee members, the Practicum Council and the School of Child and Youth Care. Miriam, thank you for your encouragement, and your dedication to and knowledge of CYC practicum. Jennifer, your leadership in the SCYC is truly inspiring. Thank you for your wisdom and gentle reminders to always hold space for hopefulness and liveliness in the work we do. Veronica, I am ever so grateful that our paths crossed so many years ago. You have transformed how I view early years practice, and life itself. I cannot thank you enough for encouraging me to apply to grad school and for being such a fabulous mentor and friend throughout.

Dedication

To my parents, who taught me, and continue to teach me, the importance of seeking out new knowledge, working hard, and above all else, living gently and with compassion for others. Thank you for being my cheerleaders and reminding me often why completing this MA was important.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Why a Project About CYC Practicum?

Across the spectrum of human service professions, including child and youth care (CYC), research has shown that most students view practicum¹ as the key component in their education and induction into the profession (Bogo, 2010; Drolet, Clark, & Allen, 2012; Ralph, Walker, & Wimmer, 2007). Practicum is seen as the site for students to consolidate knowledge and skills and to be socialized into the profession—the bridge between the academy and practice (Bogo, 2010; Drolet et al., 2012; Ralph et al., 2008). Simultaneously, within Western higher education, there has been a recent push to increase employability skills of graduates through work-integrated learning experiences, including practica (Olesen, 2009; Pegg, Waldock, Hendsy-Isaac, & Lawton, 2012; Smith, 2012). Through high-quality practicum experiences, it is viewed that students receive meaningful feedback, gain self-confidence (Wee, Weber, & Park, 2014), strengthen communication skills, learn about collaborating with colleagues (Recchia, Beck, Esposito, & Tarrant, 2009), and gain insight into their own strengths, challenges, and specific interests (Chandler & Williamson, 2013). Practicum is founded on a belief that “authentic and deep learning occurs when students apply relevant knowledge and skills to solve real-life problems encountered by actual practitioners in the field” (Ralph, Walker, & Wimmer, 2010, p. 2). However, human services practicum and practice are messy—

¹ Practicum is an experiential learning component of many higher education programs, including CYC, in which students are assigned placements in practice settings. The terminology used to describe these academic field experiences varies depending on the profession. Terms used in the literature across professions include *field experience*, *internship*, *clinical experiences*, *field education*, *preceptorship*, *cooperative education*, and *service learning*. In this paper I use the terms *practicum* and *field experience(s)* interchangeably to refer to CYC practice-based educational experiences in which students complete a required number of unpaid hours in university-assigned practice sites.

coming into being through and with particular politics that shape how we view what practicum and practice are and what they might be. As CYC scholars Newbury and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2015) state:

The 21st century is marked with a variety of unique and intersecting issues, opportunities, and political realities. Child and Youth Care (CYC) theory and practice continues to take place within and in response to a range of relationships, discourses, and institutions. Our relationship with the physical world is now understood with a sense of urgency as never before. Globalized economic systems are impacting how we organize on institutional and even interpersonal levels. Technologically mediated worlds are altering who we are, how we engage with each other, and how we envision and enact futures together. These pressing issues are often cast to the margins of CYC discussions, but are increasingly being experienced by many as central to the work we do and the lives we live.

(p. 494)

Among the discourses taking place within the profession of CYC, social justice is often described as an important component of our work (Newbury, 2009). Certainly, it would seem that righting the inequitable distribution of “wealth, opportunities, and privilege” (“social justice,” Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.) within our communities and *caring* for children, youth, and families would be mutually constituted concepts. Yet, as Newbury and Pacini-Ketchabaw imply, a stronger stance toward and deeper understanding of social justice is needed in the CYC field, and, I would add, in CYC practicum as well. Too often the geographical, political, historical, cultural, material, and

social contexts that shape the lives of children, youth, families, communities, and CYC professionals go unacknowledged and are thus invisibilized. The ongoing legacy of settler colonization in Canada is one example. However, with the recent release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) final report (2015a), no longer can Canadians turn blindly away from the heartbreaking narratives of residential school survivors, and we are called to task. For the University of Victoria's School of Child and Youth Care, the work to be done will extend beyond practicum, as postsecondary institutions must take up the TRC's calls for action (2015b) to make universities more relevant and welcoming places for Indigenous students. By reconceptualizing and politicizing CYC practicum, I believe we can open up a richly generative space for child and youth care faculties, students, and communities to rethink how we construct children, youth, families, community, CYC professionals, practice, and curriculum.

For students, being in practicum presents conditions of multiplicity and intrinsic uncertainty that require students, instructors, and practicum supervisors to act in the moment in ways that are "inherently singular at the point of accomplishment" (Nicolini & Roe, 2014 p. 68). In practicum, students are expected to hold this multiple-singular tension and act in ways that are ethical, skilled, and knowledgeable (Shulman, 2005; Walker, 2010). As Shulman (2005) states, it is "insufficient to claim that a combination of theory, practice, and ethics defines a professional's work" (p. 18). It is much more complicated than that. For instructors and practicum coordinators, adding to the complexity are the logistical challenges, such as locating sufficient numbers of high-quality practicum sites for students (Ralph et al., 2008). Students have expressed their own frustrations with practicum, such as inequitable university policies or experiencing

inadequate practicum supervision (Ralph et al., 2008). Ralph, Walker, and Wimmer (2010), scholars who conducted a large pan-Canadian study on practicum across a range of professions, concluded: “The importance of this practical/clinical component, together with a growing global shortage of professionals in a variety of fields, require [sic] that professional education institutions seriously explore how to optimally conduct the practicum portion of their programs” (p. 2).

As a graduate of child and youth care studies and an early childhood educator, I have reflected many times throughout my career on the importance of my own practicum experiences. These experiences spanned the continuum from highly rewarding to highly challenging and taught me much about young children, youth, families, teamwork, the CYC profession, and myself. I am very grateful for the support I received from practicum instructors and mentors who generously provided me with their time, feedback, support, guidance, wisdom, and opportunities for learning. In my present position as a university child care centre administrator, I take great joy in witnessing practicum students’ learning. Offering practicum placements and mentorship to students in our child care centres is one way we, as early childhood educators, can give back to the field. However, my staff and I have also struggled with challenges with the current UVic CYC practicum structure. Most of our challenges have been echoed in the literature. Just as students are positioned in multiple ways, so am I. In addition to being a graduate student and university employee, I am also white, a settler, middle-class, and a Canadian-born mother. The privileged experiences I have had, largely as a result of my “birthright,” have shaped the perceptions I bring to this project. I recognize that power is distributed in inequitable ways throughout our communities, including the academy and practice

settings, and I strive, imperfectly, to practice cultural humility and social justice in my work.

Given the important role of practicum in the field of CYC there is a surprising dearth of literature on the subject. My project intends to redress this gap by producing two resources for the School of Child and Youth Care (SCYC) at the University of Victoria. First, I produce a comprehensive literature review on child and youth care practicum, drawing on two broad areas of scholarly and peer-reviewed literature: (1) research on practicum in human services professions, and (2) communities of practice (Wenger, 1998). In addition to outlining the key themes, my literature review focuses more specifically on seven innovative conceptualizations of practicum. Second, I produce a “practicum working document” that will build on the literature review by offering suggestions for the University of Victoria SCYC undergraduate practicum program. These deliverables were developed in collaboration with the SCYC Practicum Council (“the Council”), which is described further on.

In the following sections I offer further context about 21st-century CYC, as well as a general overview of practica within the broad field of human services. I briefly outline the major themes on practicum in the literature before moving on to explain the development of this project, including describing the SCYC Practicum Council, my epistemological influences, and the connection of both to the project. I close this chapter by detailing this project’s specific objectives.

What is Child and Youth Care?

Within the broader spectrum of human service professions, child and youth care (CYC) holds a contested identity (Gharabaghi, Skott-Myhre, & Krueger, 2014; Little,

2011; J. White, 2015). Primarily, CYC practice is “founded on a commitment to the well-being of children, youth, families and community” (University of Victoria, 2016c, para. 2) and is often defined as relational, strengths-based, contextual, and holistic (Pence & White, 2011). CYC practitioners support the needs of children, youth, and families in a diversity of settings, including early years centres, residential group homes, community-based organizations, outreach settings, child protection, adventure therapy settings, and schools—working in the life-spaces of children and youth (Stuart, 2013). CYC practitioners’ knowledges are multiple and complex (Gharabaghi et al., 2014; Pence & White, 2011; J. White, 2007). While the foundation of our practice continues to be our responsive relationships with children, youth, and families, how we work, how we define ourselves, and how we think about our practice are shifting to include greater complexity (Little, 2011; Loiselle, de Finney, Khanna, & Corcoran, 2012; Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2011; J. White, 2015). CYC emerges from a diversity of interdisciplinary traditions and theoretical perspectives. Little (2011) cautions us that in a quest to define a common CYC identity, we risk reifying CYC “theory and standards”(p. 10) She argues against binary views of what is or is not CYC and encourages us to hold on to the plurality that is CYC, stating that doing so “enriches dialogue about practice, theorizing, and ethical decision making, and introduces a host of potentialities of seeing the world of children, youth, families and communities” (Little, 2011, p. 9).

The CYC field is in the process of being reconceptualized to include critical perspectives that reject modernist taken-for-granted assumptions including universality, developmentalism, objectivity, individualism, and heteronormativity (Pence & White, 2011). In stepping away from viewing children, youth, families, communities, and

ourselves in decontextualized ways, the field is moving toward politicizing CYC practice and taking into account the complexities and sociopolitical and material inequities that exist. Newbury (2009) argues for greater enactment of social justice in the caring work of CYC—urging us to move beyond individualistic views of children, youth and families. She reminds us, as CYC professionals, of our own complicity in obscuring social inequities, pointing out the ways in which we so often position children, youth and families as *victims*; and position ourselves as *carers*; while we fail to name and alter the oppression that has created these challenging conditions for children, youth and families. Newbury (2009) asserts that, “when advocating systemic change, we too often forget that we comprise those systems” (p. 27). Newbury’s views are echoed by others in the field. Loiselle, de Finney, Khanna, and Corcoran (2012) state, “critical concepts like neocolonialism and neoliberalism are not only relevant for the lives of children, youth, and families, but are the very forces that shape the realities of poverty, homelessness, and multiple forms of violence they experience” (p. 180). Child and youth care scholar Jennifer White (2015) reminds us that we are always implicated in the uneven ways that privilege and power play out in our communities. She acknowledges that CYC professionals are challenged to know how to respond justly “when there are no singular or straightforward” answers (J. White, 2015, p. 501) to 21st-century contexts such as globalization, colonialism, neoliberalism, social and structural inequities, and risk aversion. White (2015) urges us forward by suggesting we formulate a CYC “ethos for the times” (p. 499) and offers a series of highly provocative questions to consider: How do we construct children, youth, and families? What counts as CYC “problems” and does CYC exist in the absence of “problems?” How do we think about differences in CYC?

How do we construct professionalization in CYC? Before we can reimagine 21st-century CYC practicum, I contend that we must first work through these important questions to develop a 21st-century CYC ethos—to better understand where our field is and where we are going. White (2015) encourages us to accept the hybridity that is CYC and to live within the tensions by complexifying our paradigms. In White's (2015) words:

When we think about CYC practice as a series of dilemmas and open-ended questions, as opposed to a set of predetermined answers that can be mapped onto a stable and knowable world, perhaps we can come to our work with greater humility and a more useful set of expectations. At the very least, such an ethos involves supporting ourselves and others to live lives of dignity and purpose, experience love and belonging, pursue culturally meaningful goals, and live in a just world. (p. 511)

As the CYC field moves forward in the 21st century, I have hope that we can join together as faculty and students to think deeply about where our field is headed. Practicum, the site where faculty, students, children, youth, families, and community members converge, provides a great starting place to approach this challenge. In the section that follows I will provide a general overview of practica structure and goals within the broader field of human services.

Typical Goals and Structure of Practica in the Human Services

Given the emphasis in our field on engaging with children, youth, and families in practice, it stands to reason that CYC faculty and students highly value the undergraduate practicum. Through practica, students have opportunities to critically reflect on their learning as they begin to integrate their experiences into professional practice (Drolet et

al., 2012). Practicum is often seen as the place where students gain further knowledge, wrestle with the challenges of practice realities, test out and enhance skills, receive feedback, make connections with theory, and reflect on their professional identity and ethics (University of Victoria, 2016a, paras. 2, 3). Graduates from a range of disciplines have stated that practicum was a critical component in preparing them for their professions and that it provided a safe, supportive place to strengthen skills and narrow specific interests (Chandler & Williamson, 2013; Ralph et al., 2008). Practicum provides a space for students to struggle with ethical dilemmas and complexity and to nurture reflective practice and critical thinking. In practicum, students become socialized into a particular approach and set of attitudes, which we label as professionalism (Chandler & Williamson, 2013). In the UVic CYC program the focus is placed on *praxis*, defined by Jennifer White (2007) as “ethical, self-aware, responsive and accountable action” and involving “the reciprocal integration of knowing, doing and being” (p. 231).

Traditionally, in many professions, including CYC, education, and social work, practicum students are supervised in a dyadic relationship with an employee of the practicum site. The practicum supervisor helps to guide the student’s practice through mutually agreed on learning goals (Drolet et al., 2012; Ralph et al., 2008; Ryan, Toohey, & Hughes, 1996). Students learn, in part, by practicing their skills through working directly with children, youth, and/or families at the practicum site, by observing the role modelling of practicum supervisors and other staff at the practicum site, through their own self reflections, and through direct feedback from the practicum supervisor (Drolet et al., 2012). Practicum sites in CYC span a wide spectrum, including not-for-profit community-based agencies; government agencies such as child protective services;

hospitals; schools; and early years centres. Universities support practica through practicum coordinators and instructors. Typically, a university practicum coordinator is responsible for locating and organizing practicum placements and matching students to placements. The university instructor oversees the practicum course, ensuring that students complete course curriculum through their practica and assignments. Practicum instructors and supervisors share responsibility for evaluating students based on established professional competencies. In most cases, the course instructor also evaluates the student based on completion of practicum course outcomes (Bogo, 2010; Drolet et al., 2012). Students meet the course outcomes by completing a minimum number of hours at the practicum site and by completing assignments, which often include reflective exercises. The practicum instructor typically visits each student and practicum supervisor dyad once or twice throughout the practicum course (Drolet et al., 2012; Ralph et al., 2008). However, technological advances over the past 30 years have shifted the ways in which academic programs are delivered. The UVic CYC practicum program is now offered through distance education (University of Victoria, 2016a).

Overview of Literature Search

In Chapter 2 I provide a detailed literature review of practicum. In this section, I provide further context for my project objectives by giving a very brief overview of the literature on practicum and the specific focus of my literature search.

In my recent worldwide database search of scholarly peer-reviewed articles published between 2010 and 2015, I could not locate a single source specific to research on CYC practicum. Given the lack of sources, I expanded my search to practicum in the broader field of human services, including early childhood education, and I also

broadened publication date parameters to include any major sources from 2007 to 2015. Perhaps the lack of sources specific to CYC practicum is not surprising given that in 1996 when Ryan, Toohey, and Hughes conducted their often-cited comprehensive worldwide database search on research on practicum in *all fields* in higher education, they discovered “a paucity of good quality research” (p. 356). Focusing on the field of social work, Marion Bogo, one the most prolific scholars in the study of field education, reached similar conclusions on the state of research on practicum within her field. She conducted a comprehensive review of the research literature published between 1999 and 2004 and stated:

Many of the field practices and standards have evolved over time and have not been subject to empirical testing. Unfortunately, those responsible for field programs report that the challenges of administration leave little time to engage in the reflective and empirical work of building the knowledge base. (Bogo, 2006, p. 185)

However, much has changed in the past 10 years and there is now a growing body of empirical data on field education informing curriculum development in the social work field (Bogo, 2010). Within the area of interprofessional and multidisciplinary studies, Ralph, Walker, and Wimmer (2008, 2010) conducted a large-scale, three-year, cross-Canada study between 2005 and 2010. These researchers used a qualitative inquiry approach to study practicum/clinical experiences within 11 professions (dentistry, education, engineering, forestry, law, medicine, nursing, veterinary medicine, pharmacy, social work, and theology) offered by 46 undergraduate departments in 9 Canadian

universities (Ralph et al., 2010). Their study provides useful information about innovative practices in practicum.

Within the literature several themes emerge, including the importance of quality in practicum supervision (Chandler & Williamson, 2013; Löfmark, Morsberg, Öhlund, & Ilicki, 2009), challenges in supervision (Bogo, Regehr, Power, & Regehr, 2007; Mallory, Cox, & Panos, 2012; Ralph et al., 2010), effects of practicum students on settings (Mallory et al., 2012; Ralph et al., 2008), the varied experiences of students during practicum (Bogo, 2010; Graves, 2010; Nickel, Sutherby, & Garrow-Oliver, 2010; Thorpe, Milliar, & Petriwskyj, 2012), logistical challenges for practicum coordinators, and tensions for student and instructors resulting from a perceived divide between coursework theory and practice (Ralph et al., 2008, 2010). The literature also includes conceptualizations for innovative and intriguing practicum designs (Clapton et al., 2008; Edmonds-Cady & Sosulski, 2012; George, Silver, & Preston, 2013; Jones, 2011; Lawrance, Damron-Rodriguez, Rosenfeld, Sisco, & Volland, 2007; Macy, Squires, & Barton, 2009; Wimmer, Legare, Arcand, & Cottrell, 2010). It is these innovative conceptualizations that I will focus on most intently in the literature review to follow.

Communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) and *landscapes of practice* (Wenger-Trayner, Fenton-O’Creevy, Hutchinson, Kubiak, & Wenger-Trayner, 2015) offer insightful ways for reimagining CYC practicum, learning, education, and community engagement. Social learning theorist Wenger (2011) defines communities of practice as “groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (p. 1). While on practicum, CYC students are members of communities of practice in their practicum settings, where they learn, contribute, and

collectively negotiate what is valued as practice with other communities of practice members. It is Wenger's (1998) belief that learning is a "fundamentally social phenomenon" (p. 3) Building on Wenger's work perhaps there are further means for communities and landscapes of practice to be enhanced in CYC practicum. In both my literature review and my practicum working document, I propose to draw on communities-of-practice theory and innovative practicum exemplars from reviewed literature in reimagining CYC practicum curriculum and structure.

Project Development

In the sections that follow I provide further information about how this project came into being. I begin by describing the SCYC Practicum Council, including its membership, and the context, vision, goals, and collective ethics that framed the Council's work. The needs of the SCYC Practicum Council and my membership as part of this group were the catalysts for this project. I explain how the present project connects with my own interests and epistemological influences, as well with as the goals of the Council (see Appendix).

The SYCY Practicum Council

In the fall of 2014 I was invited to join the newly formed University of Victoria SCYC Practicum Council. Given my own interests in CYC practicum as a practicum site I was keenly interested in participating as a member. The Council was a group comprised of dedicated members of SCYC faculty and professional staff, practicum coordinators and instructors, graduate students, and practicum supervisors. The purpose of the Council was to think more deeply about CYC practicum, discussing current tensions and identifying strengths in the existing practicum structure to build on. During our meetings,

members expressed their appreciation both for the multitude of ways in which practicum had enriched students' learning experiences and for the traditions of practicum in SCYC. Members expressed gratitude to the coordinators of the practicum program who had spent years nurturing relationships with community-based practicum supervisors, attending to the learning needs of thousands of SCYC students and creating meaningful SCYC practicum curriculum and assessment tools. In setting the context for the work ahead, Council members were reminded that "the current practicum courses were developed in response to a particular set of conditions to meet the needs at the time" (White, personal communication, September 23, 2014). In looking forward, we wondered what "contextual conditions . . . we need to be responding to *now*?" (White, personal communication, September 23, 2014). Given the central role of practicum in the CYC program, Council members pondered how to create curriculum frameworks that would be "dynamic, relevant and responsive" (White, personal communication, September 23, 2014). While we acknowledged the strengths of the existing practicum program, there was a general agreement among the Council members that the time for change was upon us. Among the current challenges cited were logistics, such as a shortage of practicum sites and competition to meet the demand for student placements across human service programs, frustrations with student assessment tools, and, for at least some of the students and practicum supervisors, confusion and dissatisfaction with practicum assignments. Most troubling, however, was the sense that practicum was being presented/seen as disembodied from the very conditions most profoundly affecting children, families, community members, and CYC students' lives (SCYC Practicum Council, personal communication, September 23, 2014).

To illustrate some of the practicum tensions that were discussed by the Council, I offer my own example. The following is the description of the final practicum, CYC 410, in fourth-year CYC studies from the University of Victoria undergraduate calendar (2014):

This supervised practicum focuses on the student's chosen professional area of interest, and provides an opportunity to apply case planning, intervention, and evaluation skills at an advanced level. Professional consultation, clinical functioning, and the integration of theory and practice are emphasized. (p. 278)

Although course descriptions cannot possibly capture all salient curricular and student outcomes, I find the implications of this description troubling. The wording is fraught with modernist language of clinical, objective expertise and expresses an underlying assumption that students "apply" knowledge and skills to fix children, youth, and families who have been reduced to "cases" requiring "interventions." In my own experience at a placement site for early years CYC students, our practicum supervisors try to make sense of students' course assignments that ask students to identify a particular child needing support and plan an "intervention." The early childhood educators at our site worry that such assignments set students up to look at children from a problem-saturated viewpoint with the gaze turned squarely toward the child, families, and immediate environment, rather than toward the cultural, societal, environmental, and historical politics that created this moment. By keeping students' attention turned toward such matters as "interventions" and "case planning," we worry that students risk missing opportunities to engage in productive spaces with children and with us as early childhood educators. We want practicum students to think together with us about how we co-

construct environments and pedagogy, how we construct children, families, communities, and ourselves, and how to respond to politics that include pressing environmental issues and colonial legacies. We want students to work through these tensions while also noticing the many resiliencies and strengths of children, families, and communities. I wonder, where in this course description does the promotion of “social justice” (University of Victoria, 2016a, “Mission Statement and Values,” para. 1), touted as a grounding principle and key value of the SCYC program, fit? Indeed, “social justice” forms not just one but *two* of the stated values of the SCYC. Social justice is first described as advocating “for de-colonizing policies, practices and relationships” (para. 10) and is subsequently referenced under “pluralistic and social justice perspectives” as attending to “diversity, inclusion, cultural attunement and advocacy within practice” (para. 13). While the SCYC’s mission statement and values are intended to ground course curricula, the advanced-level practicum course description appears disconnected from these key values of pluralism and social justice.

From its inception, Practicum Council members stated a vision for a more relevant, politicized and coherent CYC curriculum framework that holistically blended practice, practicum, and other coursework together, pushing the boundaries in creating social change. As professionals within the field of CYC, Council members are advocates wishing to promote socially just approaches through practicum by engaging with critical frameworks. The majority of Council members, myself included, were/are also settlers on unceded colonized territories. As settlers, we acknowledged our inability to escape our privilege. We cannot presume to comprehend the travesties committed to Indigenous peoples on the land on which we study and teach. Within our communities, the violent

histories of settler colonialism include expropriation of land, resources, and peoples; genocide; fragmenting of communities and families; abuse; minoritizing; subjugation; racialization; and poverty (Assembly of First Nations, 2011). These legacies live on, yet are invisibilized. As Tuck and Yang (2012) assert, “the disruption of Indigenous relationships to land represents a profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence. This violence is not temporarily contained in the arrival of the settler but is reasserted each day of occupation” (p. 5). Council members humbly acknowledged these painful inheritances and our own ongoing implication in these conditions, and stated a collective wish to expose injustices (SCYC Practicum Council, personal communication, February 16, 2015). By moving toward politicizing CYC practicum, the Council hoped to transform practice through praxis, working toward making transparent the ways in which colonization, race, gender, class, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, and ability shape power relations and inequities in our world. In doing so, Council members also recognized that our practice is “never innocent” and “we are always implicated” (SCYC Practicum Council, personal communication, March 13, 2015).

SCYC Practicum Council Collective Ethics

In moving toward transforming practicum, the Council stated a need to ground the work of reimagining practicum within “collective ethics.” An external consultant was called in to facilitate the Council’s process of collaboratively identifying and discussing collective ethics. During these sessions, members shared their intentions “to embrace the tensions,” recognizing the multiplicities, nuances, and contradictions that are inherent in practicum and praxis (SCYC Practicum Council, personal communication, March 13, 2015). We acknowledged that CYC practitioners, children, youth, and families are

always in a state of “becoming,” and always entangled in messy relations within the world. The Council’s wish was for a practicum that was “dynamic, provocative, and responsive” (SCYC Practicum Council, personal communication, March 13, 2015), wherein listening and reflexivity would be paramount and injustice acknowledged, critiqued, and acted on. Fundamentally, the Council’s desire was to make explicit our complicity in settler colonial legacies and to act as imperfect and fluid allies to those with whom we work.

Central to its collective ethics, Practicum Council members affirmed their desire to embrace “decolonizing practices” and to practice cultural humility. Yet, the group wrestled with how these goals might be enacted. As Tuck and Yang (2012) remind us, “decolonization is not a metaphor” (p. 1). Quite simply, “decolonization brings about the repatriation of Indigenous land and life” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 1), yet too often the term *decolonization* is misappropriated and unexamined, allowing those who use it to sidestep our accountability while we perform “decolonization.” Council members acknowledged the need to take seriously the naming of decolonization as part of its collective ethics (SCYC Practicum Council, personal communication, March 13, 2015). Otherwise, as Tuck and Yang (2012) warn, “the decolonial desires of white, non-white, immigrant, postcolonial, and oppressed people can similarly be entangled in resettlement, reoccupation, and reinhabitation that actually further settler colonialism” (p. 1). As foundation for the Council’s collective ethics and the work ahead, members emphasized the need to clarify their specific intentions in “decolonizing” practicum, ensuring that use of this term does not ring hollow, becoming simply, in the words of Tuck and Yang (2012), another “settler move to innocence” (p. 1).

Without losing sight of the unique issues of settler colonialism, and wary of conflating differences, our Council included intersectionality as a component of its collective ethics. In 1989 American critical race and legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term *intersectionality*, although the tenets of intersectionality have long historical roots (Museus & Griffin, 2011). Intersectionality has been described as a social justice framework that examines “how factors including socio-economic status, race, class, gender, sexualities, ability, geographic location, refugee and immigrant status combine with broader historical and current systems of discrimination such as colonialism and globalization to *simultaneously* determine inequalities among individuals and groups” (Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, 2006, p. 5). Intersectionality takes into account the multiplicities of social locations and power relations in co-constituting inequities that are layered, complex, and interrelated (Clark & Drolet, 2014; Hankivsky, 2014). Intersectional scholar Dhamoon (2009) describes it in the following way:

We are never *just* looking at the identities of individual/social group or intersecting categories; rather, we are looking at specific ways, specific moments, and specific contexts in which subjects come into being relationally. And how these processes function, and are resisted, within systems of domination. (p. 24, italics in original)

The Council members hoped that by drawing on an intersectional framework we would deepen our understanding of children, families, and communities, as well as ourselves, by pushing ourselves to examine the interplay of identity, subjectivities, and power dynamics (SCYC Practicum Council, personal communication, March 13, 2015).

Yet, the Council members wondered how to move forward with CYC practicum to create a structure and curriculum that honoured these collective ethics. How could practica be reshaped in a way that meaningfully held us all—administration, faculty, instructors, mentors, and students—“response-able” (SCYC Practicum Council, personal communication, March 13, 2015)? How might we better the lives of the children, youth, and families with whom we work without losing sight of our own complicity in creating the unjust conditions in which they live? How could this work be done from a “desire-based framework” (see Tuck, 2009), keeping joy and hopefulness alive? How could we hold on to the momentum, the commitment, and the depth of feeling that was palpable in the Council sessions and inscribe these into practicum curriculum? In my literature review (see Chapter 2) and practicum working document (see Chapter 3), I have aimed to respond to these important questions and honour the SCYC Practicum Council’s collective ethics to provide new conceptualizations of CYC practicum. This project is further influenced by my epistemological influences, which affect the literature I am particularly drawn to and the suggestions I put forward in the practicum working document. I outline these influences in the following section.

Epistemological Influences

During my MA studies I have been exposed to feminist poststructural, postcolonial, and social constructivist theories. I bring these influences to my project and my own practice. As a feminist, I value the subjective, contextualized, and lived experiences of others and the empowerment of those who have been silenced, marginalized, and excluded (Gair, 2011). A feminist poststructural viewpoint helps me to expose inequities in power and the ways in which knowledge is constructed through

dominant discourses (Pacini-Ketchabaw, Nxumalo, Kocher, Elliot, & Sanchez, 2015). Practicum, as experiential education, is most often viewed in the existing literature through a social constructivist lens (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). Social constructivism, rooted in the work of scholars such as Dewey (1938) and Vygotsky (1978), “posits that learners construct their own knowledge from their experiences” (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 297). Although the focus is on the individual learner, meaning making is seen as an active and social activity mediated through culture (Merriam et al., 2007). Viewed through a social constructivist lens, learning happens through collaboration, dialogue, and engagement, including consideration of and critique of others’ views (Merriam et al., 2007). Alice Kolb and David Kolb (2005), respected scholars in the field of experiential learning theory, credit Paulo Freire, critical pedagogy advocate, as well as Kurt Lewin, founder of social psychology, for providing foundational scholarship for experiential theory. Kolb and Kolb (2005) view experiential learning as both centred on students’ lived experiences and an authentic, transformative, active, and holistic process. Experiential learning is seen as recursive, made up of cycles of experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting (Kolb, 1984).

I add a feminist poststructural perspective to this social constructivist paradigm to help me expand my understanding of *learners* and *knowledge* as alterable entities. As feminist poststructural scholar Lenz Taguchi (2007) states, “theories in education, teaching and learning, and even we ourselves as learning subjects, are constituted by, and continuously reconstituted [through] collectively and culturally-specific materialized mean-making” (p. 278). Therefore, our own subjectivities as practicum students, coordinators, instructors, mentors, and university administrators, and how we view

practicum learning, are constantly in flux. I believe that this hybrid epistemology of feminist poststructural, postcolonial, and social constructivist perspectives can disrupt commonly held views of CYC practicum and move us beyond disembodied, instrumental, technical, rational views of learning to open up new possibilities for a reimagined practicum.

Project Development Process

Figure 1 illustrates the phases of the present project and its relationship to the work of the SCYC Practicum Council. In-depth consultations with stakeholders such as students, practicum mentors, and UVic administration fall outside of the present work of the Council but are included here as a suggestion for next steps (see Chapter 3).

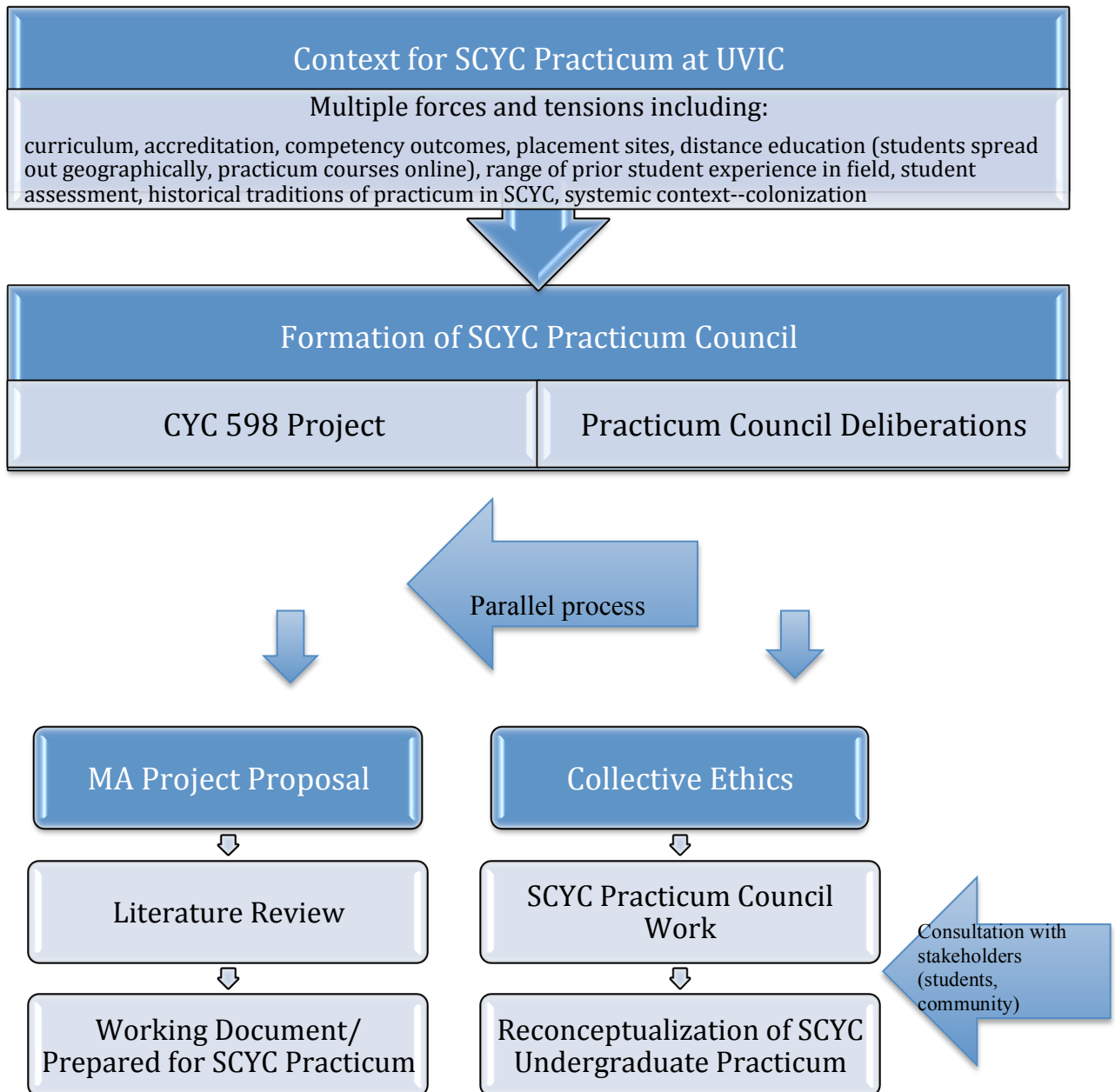


Figure 1: Project development process.

In the following sections I detail the objectives of this project, describing my deliverables and the overarching questions I aim to explore.

MA Project Objectives

My project objectives are to produce two deliverables for the UVic SCYC: (1) a comprehensive literature review of peer-reviewed and scholarly literature on practicum and communities of practice, and (2) a practicum working document that reimagines SCYC practicum by providing suggestions that build on the literature on innovative practices in practicum and communities of practice. My overarching questions are as follows:

- What would CYC practicum, at its most lively and generative, include?
- How might the SCYC undergraduate practicum be reimagined to address areas of tension and open up new possibilities for both student learning and the SCYC engagement with community?
- In reimagining SCYC practicum, how can we draw on existing program strengths and incorporate innovative new ideas from both peer-reviewed and scholarly literature on practicum and the SCYC Practicum Council discussions?

The guiding questions for my literature search are as follows:

- What predominant themes are identified in the literature concerning human services practicum supervision, structure, and experiences and outcomes for students, agencies, mentors, and others?
- What innovative practicum practices have been identified, conceptualized, and/or studied? If these have been put into practice, what were the outcomes?

- What are communities of practice, and how might this concept be applied to CYC practicum?

My practicum working document builds on themes and exemplars from the literature review to provide suggestions for:

- a reimagined CYC practicum, SCYC faculty and administration, and the roles of practicum coordinators, students, and site mentors; and
- the change process itself.

Summary

Practicum is a highly valued and critical component in CYC students' education. Yet, practicum, like CYC practice, is in need of being further contextualized and politicized to respond to 21st-century challenges. This project, informed by peer-reviewed literature and the rich discussions that took place within the SCYC Practicum Council in 2014 and 2015 and further shaped by my own interests, experiences, and epistemological influences, aims to address a gap in the literature on CYC practicum. In the chapter that follows I review current literature on practicum, outlining predominant themes and focusing on innovative exemplars and communities of practice conceptualizations. Throughout the next chapter I aim to explore what CYC practicum, at its most lively and generative, would include.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Overview

Within peer-reviewed and scholarly literature, various aspects of practicum have been researched and conceptualized. The purpose of this literature review is to synthesize the major themes and research findings on practicum, paying particular attention to the literature on communities of practice and seven innovative conceptualizations of practicum and practice. In looking to the literature for answers to these questions, my primary interest is sources within the general field of human services because these can be applied most easily to CYC practicum. However, I include some sources that fall outside of human services that offer particularly interesting conceptualizations or research to apply to CYC practicum. I believe these innovative exemplars offer possibilities to build on in the CYC practicum program. The literature on practicum is broad and themes that I will touch on only briefly in the first sections of this review are more thoroughly reviewed by others within the UVic SCYC (Keough, 2016; McGrath, forthcoming). The latter sections of this literature review will focus more narrowly on the following guiding questions that fall under two general areas of interest to the SCYC Practicum Council:

- (1) Communities of practice—What are communities of practice and landscapes of practice and how might these concepts be applied to CYC practicum to foster both communities of learning for students and stronger connections between community and the SCYC?
- (2) Practicum innovations—Within recent scholarly and peer-reviewed literature, what innovative practicum practices have been conceptualized and researched? If

innovative practicum conceptualizations have been put into practice, what have been the outcomes? In wanting to transform CYC practicum to become, or to be sustained, at its liveliest, what concepts from the reviewed literature might we apply?

I begin this literature review by setting the stage for CYC practicum, describing some of the important politics that shape what practicum is and how it is viewed.

Politics of Practicum

Practicum does not exist in a vacuum—it is inherently bound to particular social-cultural-geographical-historical-political forces that create and shape it. Although much of the published research assumes a universalized practicum, practicum comes into being under a vast array of politics that are neither silent nor innocent. The dynamic forces of histories, culture, geographies, social conditions, and politics interrelate in powerful and complex ways, affecting how practicum is defined and gets taken up by students, higher learning institutions, practicum sites, future employers, and society. By keeping the research gaze turned strictly on practicum students, supervisors, and curriculum, as some examples, we both disregard and also assume particular sociopolitical and cultural contexts. Through these actions, we marginalize those who do not conform to these tacit values. In this section I touch briefly on the literature regarding two key influences that shape CYC practicum in Canada: colonization and neoliberalism.

Colonization.

In the introduction I spoke of the destructive effects that colonization has had and continues to have on First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples in Canada. The wounds of this cultural genocide live on in our societies, including our educational system, through

ethnocentricity, assimilation, marginalization, and silencing (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Brittain and Blackstock (2015) conducted an extensive literature review and analysis of First Nations child poverty within Canada and they paint an extremely bleak picture. Citing statistics provided by the Office of the Auditor General in 2008, Brittain and Blackstock (2015) state that First Nations children are 60 to 80 percent more likely than non-Aboriginal children to be taken into care. Colonization has had a devastating and pervasive effect on what counts as knowledge—devaluing Indigenous ways of knowing. In spite of the tremendous legacy of colonization there is a glaring lack of research on postcolonial or Indigenous views of practicum in human services. Canadian researchers Clark et al. (2010) conducted a wide-scale search within social work and human services literature and stated, “The literature reviewed showed an absolute dearth of information on Aboriginal field education” (“Context of Field Education,” para. 2). Australian researchers Gair, Miles, Savage, and Zuchowski (2015) echoed this report, stating, “There is minimal literature that discusses the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students participating in field education, and no apparent exploration of whether Australian social work field placements appropriately serve the needs of Indigenous students” (p. 33).

The scant literature reveals a number of significant challenges that Indigenous students have faced in practicum and, as new graduates, in practice as well. Gair et al. (2015) conducted interviews with 11 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social work students and graduates aged between 29 and 55 and concluded that “students often felt culturally unsafe and experienced significant racism in their field placements” (p. 44). Participants reported feeling “alone and isolated” (p. 40) and receiving comments from

field education staff that revealed “inappropriate and racist assumptions made by non-Indigenous staff” (p. 40). The comments, which acted to homogenize and stereotype indigeneity, ran the gamut from “unintentional” (p. 40) and uninformed to “abusive” (p. 41) and derisive. Participants also reported experiencing a lack of understanding from their field instructors about their “lived experiences of disadvantage” (p. 42) and how personal challenges, such as lack of stable housing, continued to affect their lives and impact their studies, or the ways in which working with clients suffering from loss and trauma sometimes triggered the students’ own past loss and trauma experiences.

Participants also reported feeling frustrated when non-Indigenous people were positioned as “experts” (p. 42) in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders’ lives and denied students “opportunities to use their cultural expertise” (p. 42). Students’ perceptions were that their “unique knowledge challenged the power of the field educator role and was resisted strongly by some supervisors” (p. 42). Drawing on the participants’ responses, Gair et al. (2015) offer three strategies for improving field education: (1) providing students with “cultural mentors” (p. 44) through a formalized partnership with Indigenous communities; (2) developing “thorough placement preparation” (p. 44) for Indigenous students, such as taking students to placement sites and helping to guide students through the culture of the organization, their policies, etc.; and (3) university staff assessing and screening the field educators for “cultural suitability” (p. 44).

Canadian intersectional researcher Nathalie Clark and her colleagues (Clark & Drolet, 2014; Clark, Drolet, et al., 2010; Clark, Reid, et al., 2012) undertook community-based participatory action research (CBPAR) through a series of studies focused on Indigenous field education. A goal of the research was “to centre indigenous and local

knowledges to engage in a reconciliation process in social work education and strengthen social justice and activism” (Clark, Reid, et al., 2012, p. 109). The researchers collected data from the following sources: interviews with 13 Indigenous students and two non-Indigenous students in practica in Indigenous settings; a focus group of 10 Indigenous field instructors and non-Indigenous field instructors working in Indigenous settings; interviews with three Indigenous and one non-Indigenous field education coordinators; four interviews with social work faculty members at three postsecondary institutions in British Columbia; and the comments of 14 Elders at a talking circle (Clark, Drolet, et al., 2010). Based on this data, Clark, Drolet, et al. (2010) recommended the following be included in social work field education: (1) “spirituality and ceremony,” including “sharing/talking circles, sweats, smudges, Elders, and potlucks for Aboriginal students” (“Spirituality & Ceremony,” para. 1); (2) having “Elders involved with all aspects of the students’ education” (“Elders Involved,” para. 1); (3) making space for “grief and loss honouring practices” (“Grief & Loss,” para. 1); (4) having field education sites that practiced “intersectional understanding” (“Anti Oppressive Field Education,” para. 1); (5) encouraging “relational supports” between “students, Elders, community, field education supervisors, and field education coordinators” (“Relational Supports,” para. 1); and (6) “ensuring the use of student wellness plans and self-care in practicum field placements” (“Ensure the Use,” para. 1).

These researchers acknowledged the importance of understanding the wide diversity of Indigenous knowledge and traditional ceremonial practices among Indigenous students, staff, faculty, and field instructors. While some First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students, faculty, and practicum staff were visitors from other territories, others,

most often students, were from local territories. Some had deep roots in their territories while others were just beginning to learn about their culture and their territory (Clark, Reid, et al., 2012). It is therefore important for the administration, faculty, and staff of the postsecondary institution to not assume that ceremonies and traditions will be the same for *all* Indigenous students, faculty, staff, and field educators. As an outcome of Clark and colleagues' (2010) study, a number of supports were put in place for Indigenous students in social work and human services field education at Thompson Rivers University and the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology in the interior of BC. These supports included "access to an Elder on campus, Indigenous faculty liaison, talking circles, Indigenous-centered experiential professional development workshop on the legacy of residential schools, and a field preparation seminar on cultural safety that was facilitated by an Indigenous trauma specialist" (Clark & Drolet, 2014, p. 8).

Clark and Drolet (2014) also conducted research focused on the experiences of practicum coordinators in working with Indigenous students in the interior of BC. The researchers conducted in-depth interviews with field four education coordinators. Based on analysis of the coordinators' responses, Clark and Drolet (2014) stressed the importance of practicum coordinators being critically reflexive and supporting students to be critically reflexive as well; allowing time to build relationships with community, students, and faculty liaisons; and advocating for culturally safe administrative policies within the postsecondary institution. As a whole, the research conducted by Gair et al. (2015) and Clark and colleagues (Clark & Drolet, 2014; Clark, Drolet, et al., 2010; Clark, Reid, et al., 2012) offer a wealth of useful ideas for strengthening practicum programs for Indigenous students and communities.

Eve Tuck (2009), while acknowledging the effects of colonization, urges us to consider carefully how damage-centred frameworks in research and education position and pathologize Aboriginal communities. In her critique, Tuck (2009) states that damage-centred research “reinforces and reinscribes a one-dimensional notion of Aboriginal peoples as ‘depleted, ruined, and hopeless’” (p. 409). She advises us to instead “re-vision our theories of change” (p. 423) in research using desire-based frameworks. As Tuck states, “it is crucial to recognize that our communities hold the power to begin shifting the discourse away from damage and toward desire and complexity” (p. 422). In the “Innovative Practices in Practicum” section to follow, I offer an example of a “desire-based framework” for Saskatchewan First Nations Education students (Wimmer, Legare, Arcand, & Cottrell, 2010)—a model that includes elements recommended in the research conducted by Gair et al. (2015) and Clark and colleagues (2010, 2012, 2014). Wimmer, Legare, Arcand, and Cottrell (2010) report on the internship experiences of First Nations teachers in the Saskatchewan Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP) and state:

Colonial power relations gave rise to certain fields of knowledge, and shifts in power relations in new times correspondingly give rise to new forms of knowledge. As Aboriginal peoples embark on a journey of decolonization . . . it is incumbent upon the academy to support this endeavor through the development of new disciplinary knowledge. In this manner the academy serves as an ally of Aboriginal peoples in legitimating Aboriginal knowledge systems through the incorporation of these insights into academic discourse, university curriculum, and research practices (pp. 143–144).

Recognizing the past and present ways in which colonization plays out in our communities, it is important that we move forward in finding new, holistic, culturally safe, and locally relevant means in recreating a “response-able” CYC practicum (SCYC Practicum Council, personal communication, March 13, 2015). In a subsequent section of this chapter I outline the research findings on Saskatchewan ITEP (Wimmer et al., 2010) and provide my reflections on the implications of ITEP learnings for SCYC practicum.

Neoliberalism in higher education.

In the West, the neoliberal agenda affects many areas of practice and education, shaping university curriculum, research, policies, and practicum. Neoliberalism values individualism, marketism, productivity, accountability, and managerialism. Within higher education, these values are seen to be driving “the consumerist turn” (Naidoo, Shankar, & Veer, 2011, p. 1142). One result of neoliberalism has been an increased focus on graduates’ employability (Olesen, 2009; Pegg et al., 2012; Preston et al., 2014; Shore, 2008; Smith, 2012). In a phenomenon that has been called “pedagogy for employability” (Pegg et al., 2012, p. 4), university students are seeking a high return on their educational dollars, and they view practicum as well as other forms of work-integrated learning as worthwhile investments. At the same time, universities are competing for a “healthy market share” of students during an era of dwindling birthrates. Completing a work experience, such as practicum or service-learning, has been seen to be associated with higher rates of subsequent employment (Ryan et al., 1996; Walker & Blankemeyer, 2013; S. White, 2007). As the UK authors of *Pedagogy for Employability* state,

the economic, political and environmental pressures upon higher education institutions (HEIs) have placed the issue of graduate

employability centre stage. . . . In an environment of high tuition fees and low economic growth, student expectations of both the qualification and the experience of higher education (HE) itself, have been raised and questioned. (Pegg et al., 2012, p. 4)

Shore (2008) argues that neoliberalism has brought to higher learning the “politics of accountability” (p. 4), including an aversion to risk, that have resulted in an “audit culture” (p. 4). These politics regulate us by defining what counts as learning and professional conduct. As Shore (2008) states, “audits, performance indicators, competitive benchmarking exercises, league tables, management by targets, and punitive research assessment exercises and periodic teaching quality reviews are the technologies that have been used to spread new public management into the governance of universities” (p. 282). Expanding on Shore’s argument, I suggest that the audit culture shows up in both practicum and program accreditation processes—in how practicum gets defined, in how students are selected and evaluated, and in what is identified as student outcomes and competencies.

Canadian social work academics George, Silver, and Preston (2013) assert that neoliberalism creates a divide between communities and the academy that is played out through what gets valued in research and practice. They argue that neoliberalism results in university administration putting pressure on faculties to generate research funding. Wehbi and Turcotte (2007) share this opinion and state that *meaningful* community-based research, in which community members are co-researchers rather than simply advisors, generates fewer direct research dollars for universities and therefore is discouraged. Both Wehbi and Turcotte (2007) and George et al. (2013) assert that a bias in what is valued as

research results in a lack of engagement between schools of social work and communities, with faculty members retreating from the radical, activist, social justice stance that social work is founded on. While practicum is a bridge between studies and community for students, some scholars argue that social work students venture into traditional, mainstream, and often government-mandated, agency-based practicum sites where the critical ideals of postfoundational social work curriculum become lost and practice is regulated (George et al., 2013; Preston et al., 2014; Razack, 2002). As stated by Preston et al. (2014), “these organizations appear to be practicing in a haze, disconnected from institutional discourses that construct social work as devoid of power and social relations and reinforce notions of expertise and individualized need within a prescribed and static interventionist approach” (p. 62).

This section has provided a very brief snapshot of the literature on important political dynamics and tensions affecting practicum. In imagining CYC practicum at its most lively, we must keep within our sight the ways in which colonization and neoliberalism permeate all aspects of practicum. In holding fast to the fundamental ideals of social justice in CYC, and in keeping with the collective ethics of the SCYC Practicum Council, we must find ways to rebuild our practicum program with inclusive and culturally relevant practices for all students and communities. While neoliberalism is undoubtedly here to stay, we must endeavour to uncover it and question its assumptions and to advocate for the practicum program’s needs as well as for child and youth care practice in general.

Community Service-Learning: Altruism or Neoliberal Project?

Before moving on to literature specific to practicum, I would like to touch on the very topical and closely related topic of community service-learning (CSL). In this section I provide information about what CSL is and how it differs from both practica and co-operative education. I outline the benefits that CSL is seen to provide for students, communities, and institutes of higher education. While I believe that CSL offers promising implications for SCYC, I wish to offer a more expansive view of CSL by highlighting its risky connections to neoliberalism. In providing a critique of CSL I draw on Raddon and Harrison's (2015) work.

To begin, Bringle, Hatcher, and McIntosh's (2006) often-cited definition describes CSL as

a course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of personal values and civic responsibility. (p. 12)

Steeped in traditions of experiential education, CSL combines three main components:

(1) students' participation in a local community-based endeavour, (2) academic coursework, and (3) critical reflection (Bringle & Clayton, 2012). While practica, co-operative education, and CSL share commonalities, there are also differences among the three. In all three modalities, the higher learning institution monitors the student's progress to varying degrees, and student learning is a desired outcome. However, in practica the *primary* outcome is "developing student knowledge and skills" (Lemieux &

Allen, 2007, p. 312); in co-operative education, the primary focus is on the student gaining work experience; and, unlike students in practica or CSL, cooperative education students are remunerated for their time by the host work experience site (Canadian Association for Co-operative Education, n.d.). Most importantly, CSL differs from practica and co-operative education in that the primary goal for CSL students is civic responsibility and filling the *community's* needs, with student learning being a secondary outcome (Lemieux & Allen, 2007).

Within higher education, CSL has been gaining traction, becoming increasingly embedded into postsecondary education (Raddon & Harrison, 2015). It is seen as a means to combine community engagement with transformative pedagogy (Felten & Clayton, 2011). The Canadian Alliance for Community Service-Learning (n.d.) states, “Within effective CSL efforts, members of both educational institutions and community organizations work together toward outcomes that are mutually beneficial” (para. 1). For students, the primary goals are engaging in enriched learning experiences through meaningful community engagement experiences and improving their future employability (Levkoe, Brail, & Daniere, 2014). CSL seems, at first blush, an antidote to neoliberalism, as well as a means of fostering stronger university-community relationships. However, Raddon and Harrison (2015) problematize this altruistic view of SCL by pointing out the ways in which service-learning masks and also sustains the neoliberal project. Firstly, for higher learning institutions in competition for limited funding and rigorous student enrollment, touting community service-learning “lends a positive public image to the post-secondary sector as a whole” (Raddon & Harrison, 2015, p. 141). Service learning is seen as a way of universities “giving back” to

communities, while at the same time shaping students into socially responsible citizens. While these may indeed be legitimate goals, Raddon and Harrison argue that they do not tell the full story. What is not made explicit is that service-learning also boosts the public image of the institution, potentially moving it up the ladder in well-publicized university rankings. I offer the following from my brief Internet search. The website Best Value Schools (2016) ranks “the top service-oriented schools by 30 year return on investment” (ROI) for students and states:

Just because a student isn't concerned primarily with financial gain, doesn't mean money shouldn't be taken into consideration. Students would do well to remind themselves that the higher the ROI, the faster they can get out of debt and get on their way to being able to serve their communities. (“Ranking Methodology,” para. 2)

While the social justice pedagogy of service-learning may be seen as counter to a neoliberal regime, instructors cannot assume that students will take up activist stances or that transformative community change will be an outcome of participating in CSL (Raddon & Harrison, 2015). Rather, service-learning courses carry a risk that higher learning institutions and students may simply *perform* social responsibility through service-learning, while being driven by instrumentalism. In my literature search I noticed the focus of published research on CSL is outcomes for *students*, with a marked paucity of research on the effects of CSL on *communities*.

However, neoliberal tensions aside, the research on service-learning is largely positive. Eyler (2011), who conducted a large review of the service-learning literature, reported that

the cumulative body of research and evaluation studies over the past decades has yielded a fairly consistent pattern of small but significant impact of service learning on adolescents' and college students' personal, academic, and social outcomes; and there is growing evidence of an impact on behaviour and civic engagement. (p. 225)

Astin et al. (2006) conducted a large study of more than 19,000 students and 200 higher learning institutions and found that students' participation in a service-learning experience was positively correlated with students' subsequent civic and political engagement. Significantly, these researchers found that this correlation was highest when faculty had guided students in critically reflecting on their service-learning experiences. While I do believe CSL offers promising possibilities for CYC students, SCYC, and communities, it is important to also hold CSL's neoliberal risks within our sight while making cautious steps forward.

Research on How to Approach Practicum

In the sections that follow I turn my attention to outlining the literature how practicum has been defined and conceptualized in terms of models, what has been identified in the research as ingredients of high-quality practicum experiences for students, and the benefits and tensions in practicum that have been identified through research.

Models of practicum.

The purpose, value, and structure of practicum have been conceptualized in various ways within the literature (Ralph et al., 2008; Ryan et al., 1996). Based on their comprehensive scan of the literature, Ryan, Toohey, and Hughes (1996) conceptualized

four fundamental models of practicum, each offering varying degrees of connection between coursework and field experience: (1) “the apprenticeship practicum” (p. 360), in which the emphasis is placed on the field experience, the mentorship of the field supervisor, and inducting the student into the profession; (2) “the academic practicum” (p. 360), whereby the university holds primary responsibility for teaching students in specialized educational placements and the focus is on applying theoretical concepts from coursework; (3) “the growth or casework practicum” (p. 361), in which the focus is on the student’s personal self-growth, gained through reflection on field experience and life experiences; and (4) “the articulated practicum” (p. 361), in which the focus is on connecting coursework to practice, and the university and the practicum supervisor share responsibility for supporting the student in meeting core competencies. It is this fourth model which seems to align best with CYC practicum and the SCYC Practicum Council’s goals.

What makes for a high-quality practicum experience?

While there is general acceptance that practicum is essential for students’ skill development (Ralph et al., 2010) and, in some cases, is seen as the most valuable component in the academic program (Clapton et al., 2006), the quality of practicum experiences can vary widely. Macy, Squires, and Barton (2009), scholars in the early childhood education field, identify the following features of a high quality practicum experience: (1) strong alignment exists between academic coursework and the philosophy of the practicum setting; (2) the student’s responsibilities at the practicum site allow him/her to practice required core competencies and meet the course outcomes; (3) the student has a diversity of experiences in practicum; (4) there is a continuum of learning

opportunities for the student with a progression from more simple tasks to more complex and challenging ones; (5) the student experiences a broad base of experiences in the practicum which can be generalized to other contexts in the future; (6) the practicum supervisor is experienced and available as a role model; (7) the student has opportunities to structure individual learning goals into the practicum experience; and finally, (8) the student receives frequent feedback from practicum mentors. As one can surmise from these criteria, the quality of supervision has been viewed in the literature as “critical” (Ryan et al., 1996, p. 372) and directly connected to the quality of the practicum experience (Korth & Baum, 2011; Löfmark et al., 2009; S. White, 2007).

However, the reality is that not all practicum students experience high-quality supervision. In Ralph et al.’s (2009) survey of 234 post-practicum Faculty of Education students, 26 percent reported that conflict with their practicum mentor was a negative aspect of their practicum. Korth and Baum (2011), informed by survey results from early childhood education students and mentors, the literature, and their own experiences as early childhood education faculty members, make several suggestions directed at practicum supervisors. These suggestions include sharing responsibilities in the early years centre with practicum students, staying open to new ideas, asking for help from the practicum coordinator or instructor when challenges arise, modelling collaboration and continuous learning, and providing students with frequent feedback. Well-respected social work field education specialist Marion Bogo (2010) has spent years studying social work fieldwork. She offers a wealth of well-supported insights into effective practicum supervision in her seminal book *Achieving Competence in Social Work Through Field Education*. She emphasizes the importance of practicum supervisors being mindful of

power relations and supporting students in the developmental learning cycles of “action-reflection-conceptualization-action” (Bogo, 2010, p. 125).

Although the primary goal of practicum is students’ learning, several studies have also pointed to the ways in which practicum benefits agencies. Practicum mentors report that students enliven their settings, bringing creative new ideas (Löfmark et al., 2009; Mallory et al., 2012; Ralph et al., 2008). Mentors see practicum supervision as “a motivating force” (Löfmark et al., 2009, p. 114) and speak of the ways in which they also grow professionally by critically reflecting with students on knowledge and theory (Bogo, 2006). On a practical level, research has shown that supervisors appreciate the opportunity to assess practicum students as potential employees and determine the goodness of fit with their sites (Ralph et al., 2008).

Reported tensions in practicum.

Although the research points to largely rewarding experiences for practicum supervisors, agencies, and staff, tensions have also been identified. Common tensions that practicum supervisors identify include lack of time for supervision, given that time for mentoring students is often treated as an add-on to supervisors’ work schedules (Clapton et al., 2006; Graves, 2010; Mallory et al., 2012; Ralph et al., 2008; Ryan et al., 1996); feeling disconnected from the postsecondary institution (Chandler & Williamson, 2013); and frustrations when supervising challenging students (Bogo et al., 2007; Finch & Taylor, 2013; Mallory et al., 2012; Robertson, 2010). Experienced practicum supervisors report largely positive experiences mentoring students; however, they also recount occasional frustrations of mentoring students who struggle with interpersonal skills, conceptual skills, or personal issues (Ryan, McCormack, & Cleak, 2006). Experienced

social work practicum supervisors speak of the heart-wrenching conflict of wishing to support students from a strengths-based stance, yet also feeling responsible to be “gatekeepers” for the profession and not pass unsuitable students (Bogo et al., 2007; Finch & Taylor, 2013; Mallory et al., 2012; Robertson, 2010). In response to these pervasive challenges for practicum supervisors, Ralph et al. (2010) report that some universities have provided mentors with tuition subsidies, library privileges, free registration to professional development events, invitations to formal banquets, awards, etc.

From practicum students’ perspectives, tensions include, as previously noted, experiencing ineffective practicum supervision. In addition, practicum students across a diversity of professions report the following challenges: (1) the practicum being disconnected from other interrelated professions, from other courses within the same program, from similar programs across universities, and from the profession itself; (2) a theory-practice divide between the coursework and the realities students face in practice; (3) practicum program changes implemented by universities without adequate forethought and consultation with students and other stakeholders; (4) lack of communication and collaboration among all of the practicum stakeholders, including faculty, students, practicum supervisors, practicum coordinators, and practicum setting staff; (5) lack of a clear and cohesive supervisory framework within which to align the mentoring relationships, expectations, and evaluations across the practicum program; and (6) students’ not having a voice in practicum structure or changes to practicum courses (Ralph et al., 2009). In Ralph et al.’s (2009) survey of preservice teachers, 67 percent of respondents reported frustration with a variety of university practicum policies and

procedures. Students gave examples such as being required to complete mandatory assignments which were never read or assessed by supervisors and were not meaningful to the students, being asked by field coordinators to identify practicum placement choices and not being placed in any of their chosen settings, and practicum not being long enough or not well placed within the context of the program as a whole (Preston et al., 2014; Ralph et al., 2009). From these examples, it is clear that students wish for transparency and for their voices to be heard in the structuring of practicum. A final notable tension often felt by students, faculty, and practicum mentors alike is a perceived theory-practice divide between the coursework and the realities students face in practice (Clapton et al., 2008; Preston et al., 2014; Ralph et al., 2009). Preston, George, and Silver (2014), academics in the field of social work, state:

On the one hand, social workers as agents of social control may perceive individuals from a deficit stance, requiring service to help them adapt to the norms and practices of society—the precursor to casework. On the other hand, social workers as agents of social change take a different stance, recognizing the threats inherent in mainstream societal values and practice, and the need for solidarity in resistance to such threats—the precursor of community work. (p. 59)

As the literature reveals, how practicum is conceptualized and actualized in terms of structure, supervision, relationships between universities and practicum settings, and the connection between coursework and practice can vary, resulting in a wide range of benefits and tensions.

Communities and Landscapes of Practice

The term *communities of practice* is described by Wenger (2011) as “groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (p.1). Given the highly relational quality of CYC practice, drawing on communities of practice literature seems a natural fit for SCYC practicum. As stated in the introduction, CYC students are already members of communities of practice in their practicum settings, where they learn, contribute, and collectively negotiate what is valued as practice. Are there other ways to foster communities of practice for CYC practicum students, for example, through partnered practicum placements or realigning the School’s engagement with community through practicum? In this section I review the literature on communities of practice with this question in mind. I am specifically interested in the literature that can be applied to the following: (1) students’ membership in communities of practice in their practicum sites; (2) fostering practicum students’ membership in communities of practice with one another through group supervision; and (3) students’ and faculty members’ participation in landscapes of practice as they move between communities of practice in courses, to practicum sites, and into community work.

I draw heavily in this section on Wenger (1998) because he has written extensively on communities of practice and is seen as the foremost expert in this field of learning theory. His notable book on this subject, *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity* (1998), has been cited more than 33,000 times. Wenger (1998) views learning as a lived and social activity that is constantly being renegotiated based on the following premises:

1. Learning is about making meaning.
2. We are social beings.
3. Knowledge is a matter of competence in which standards are socially and culturally produced.
4. Knowing comes from active engagement in the world.
5. Learning comes from constructing identities—who we are, how we interpret meaning, and how we participate, etc.

Communities of practice are not limited to practicum or practice (Wenger, 2011). Indeed, communities of practice are “an integral part of our daily lives” (Wenger, 1998, p. 7) and are formed both formally and informally. Students are members of both literal and virtual communities of practice through their online courses, on-campus courses, in their families, at work sites, and within social groups. Membership in communities of practice can vary from full membership to peripheral membership, and it is at the latter end of this spectrum where students’ induction into practicum begins. Over time and with more experience in the workplace, new members earn legitimacy and are given increasingly broader access to learning about practice (Wenger, 1998). Wenger describes peripheral membership as “an ambiguous position” that involves both “inclusion and exclusion” (Wenger, 1998, p. 120) in which new members get caught up on the community’s shared history. Within practice, competence is constantly being negotiated and redefined through a ripple effect each time new members, such as practicum students, enter into the community of practice (Wenger, 1998). Practice is political—“an emergent structure” that is “neither inherently stable nor inherently unstable” (Wenger, 1998, p. 97). As the author states, “Learning involves a close interaction of order and

chaos” (p. 97). Wenger (1998) makes a clear point that communities of practice are not simply “havens of peace” (p. 101); they are also political—with knowledge and identities constantly in flux, always being renegotiated and with power relations at play (Wenger, 1998; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015).

Communities of practice embody both theory and practice, whereas, as Wenger (1998) states, practice and theory are often seen as divided from one another with practice being defined as “an antonym for theory, ideas, ideals or talk” (p. 48). Using a communities of practice perspective moves us beyond this binary debate, with both theory and practice seen as mutually constituted and always present, although their interrelationships may be complex. We are always theorizing and practicing, although at times the focus of our work is more on one than the other.

Wenger (1998) offers interesting views on the relationship between education and learning and draws our attention to the ways in which the two can be disconnected, stating:

An educational design faces issues of identification and negotiability at multiple levels. To the extent that it is a process of colonizing learning, of claiming a territory, of deciding what matters, and of defining success and failure, it is a contested terrain. Like organizational design, it involves a whole constellation of practices, but can differentially privilege the various perspectives of specific communities. (p. 269)

Wenger (1998) argues that for curriculum to be meaningful it must engage students’ identities through their lived experiences. He states that there is always an essential tension in education between the local and the global. Educational design

focuses on the global—to maximize applicability, curriculum must be more abstract and general. However, students' experiences are localized. Child and youth care curriculum, for example, must prepare students to work in a wide spectrum of settings; however, in order for students to make meaning of coursework, they must see the linkages to their own field experiences. As Wenger (1998) states,

deep transformative experiences that involve new dimensions of identification and negotiability, new forms of membership, multi membership, and ownership of meaning—even in one specific or narrowly defined domain—are likely to be more widely significant in terms of the long-term ramifications of learning than extensive coverage of a broad, but abstractly general, curriculum. (p. 268)

When students' identities are engaged, the linkages formed between their lived experiences and curriculum help to keep practice and learning alive through an iterative process. As examples of this, students share their practice experiences with others in their classroom community of practice as they reflect together on coursework theory. Students also share their coursework theory with their practicum community of practice. This process also guards against the threat of education becoming self-contained. Wenger (1998) suggests that the following three questions be considered when designing curriculum:

- (1) How can we broaden the scope of coverage without losing the depth of local engagement?
- (2) How can we create links to other practices so that education does not become self-contained?

- (3) How can we enable transformative experiences that change students' understanding of themselves as learners and thus their ability to move among practices and learn whatever they need to learn where they are? (p. 269)

I believe these questions could provide excellent stimulus for reflecting on CYC curriculum.

Woven together, multiple communities of practice interlock to form complex tapestries, which are labeled “landscapes of practice” (Wenger, 1998; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). Seen through this perspective, practicum students are in communities of practice, and indeed, landscapes of practice in their practicum sites, in their courses, in work sites, as members of professional associations, etc. When students enter practicum they are initially “legitimate peripheral participants” (Wenger, 1998, p. 100) in this new community of practice, and they act as brokers between the higher learning institution and the practicum site. The landscape is thus “a weaving of both boundaries and peripheries” (Wenger, 1998, p. 118). Each community of practice has its own “regime of competence” (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 14); therefore, the landscape includes both points of connection between communities as well as areas of contested terrain. “Knowledgeability” differs from the regime of competence in that it is developed in a landscape of practice and is produced “in a person’s relations to a multiplicity of practices across the landscape” (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 13). Through boundary encounters come multiple possibilities for transforming practice through critical reflection within competing communities of practice—assumptions can be challenged and pedagogy can become newly defined. Practice is enriched when the landscape and its boundaries are opened up rather than silenced—

when competing truths and hierarchies of power are explored (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). As an example, Brigham and Smith (2008) completed a qualitative study of the experiences of 11 health care workers who were enrolled in subsequent studies in nursing. They found that the student nurses thrived in their clinical experiences, although the boundary encounters the students experienced were challenging. At the students' clinical sites, the students were viewed by the mentoring staff as experienced health care workers and assumed to possess more nursing knowledge and skills than they did. The researchers posit that through these boundary encounters, the students built resilience through three identified resources. First, the students had to frequently stake their claim as students and thus legitimate peripheral members in order to create space for their learning. In this way, they were able to actively navigate their multi membership. Second, the student nurses developed a strong support network with one another, creating their own community of practice to help process and navigate the cognitive and emotional experience. As Fenton-O'Creevy, Brigham, Jones, and Smith (2015) state, the student nurses "used each other as a resource to 'make sense' of both practice situations and the academic learning that they were bringing into practice" (p. 58). Finally, the students were seen to build resilience by finding reflective space, such as learning journals, for processing "internal dialogue" (Fenton-O'Creevy et al., p. 59) and integrating their academic and practice-based learning.

Implications for SCYC from communities of practice literature.

Knowledgeability never evolves from only one source of knowledge. As stated by Fenton-O'Creevy et al. (2015), students are "on a learning trajectory through a landscape of practice" (p. 151). CYC students are legitimate peripheral members of communities of

practice in their practicum sites, as well as boundary brokers between the university, their courses, and the practice site. Students bring to practicum sites new theories and perspectives, and bring back into their classrooms or online discussion boards learning experiences and new practice perspectives from their placement sites. Additionally, students often come into the SCYC program with prior work experience in the CYC field. Students' multi-membership in overlapping communities of practice helps to enrich practice by opening up reflexive spaces for students, practicum mentors, instructors, and work colleagues to negotiate practice meanings. Within the SCYC, one possibility is to nurture communities of practice at practicum sites by grouping students together. Recently in my own workplace, we had several students from various years of the CYC program as well as the local college on practica within our child care centres. While the students worked in various centres and had different practicum supervisors, they met together biweekly with a SCYC graduate student who acted as a group facilitator and guided the students to critically reflect on their experiences in the context of their course assignments. During their sessions together, students shared their experiences, gained support from one another, and integrated their learning in new ways. The students' feedback about this process was extremely positive. Fenton-O'Creevy and colleagues (2015), scholars who have written about practice-based education ask, "What might it mean to abandon a view of universities as standing above the landscape and for them to play a convening role, co-constructing knowledge with practitioners from across landscapes of practice" (p. 159)? In the sections that follow I offer exemplars for the SCYC of how such a convening role might be conceptualized in practicum by realigning the relationship between the university and the community.

Innovative Practices in Practicum

As we envision CYC practicum at its most generative and lively, what conceptualizations from the literature can we build on? In this section I summarize literature on seven innovative practicum models that might serve as exemplars for UVic SCYC practicum. I believe these conceptualizations offer springboards for the SCYC to use in reimagining practicum, opening up spaces for us to consider ways of developing culturally relevant practicum programs for Indigenous students and communities, rethinking practicum supervision, and realigning practicum with communities. The exemplars to follow include (1) the Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP) at the University of Saskatchewan; (2) a social work education demonstration project from Scotland in which academic advisors worked with students in placement sites; (3) a community-based hub practicum model proposed for social work in Canada; (4) BOOST, an established service learning practicum program in early childhood education at the University of Oregon; (5) a social work situated learning model of community practice offered at Illinois State and Michigan State Universities; (6) the longstanding Hartford Partnership Program for Aging Education, a graduate-level social work practicum program in the US; (7); and finally, a short-term rural practicum model.

Saskatchewan ITEP First Nations education.

I begin this section by outlining a program that responds to calls for decolonizing teacher education by placing Aboriginal culture and First Nations students' needs at the centre—the University of Saskatchewan's Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP). Earlier, I spoke of Eve Tuck's (2009) call for desire-based research to replace damage-centred research. With Tuck's words in mind, I offer an example of such desire-based

research. Wimmer, Legare, Arcand, and Cottrell (2010) report on an innovative program for First Nations preservice education students at the University of Saskatchewan. The authors' research was conducted as part of a larger pan-Canadian project focused on practicum and clinical experiences in a variety of professions (Ralph et al., 2010). As Wimmer and colleagues' (2010) example illustrates, a successful practicum program is holistic in nature—placed within the context of many other program features.

In the early 1970s, Saskatchewan established a band-controlled school system for First Nations on reserves “to improve educational attainment among Aboriginal peoples and to serve as a vehicle for the revitalization and transmission of languages, cultures, and world views of Aboriginal groups” (Wimmer et al., 2010, p. 139). Responding to the growing demand for First Nations teachers, the University of Saskatchewan established ITEP in 1972 and since then more than 1,000 students have graduated from the program (Wimmer et al., 2010). ITEP follows the curriculum of the existing bachelor of education program, with some important program differences. One mandate of the program is to revitalize and preserve First Nations culture and languages. Therefore, First Nations culture, perspectives, and protocols form the fabric with which the program, including curriculum, is woven. ITEP endeavours to act as an “ally of Aboriginal peoples in legitimizing Aboriginal knowledge systems through the incorporation of these insights into academic discourse, university curriculum, and research practices” (Wimmer et al., 2010, p. 144). Elders participate in the program, First Nations cultural events are celebrated, and strong connections are nurtured between ITEP faculty, staff, and students and First Nations communities. A second mandate of the program is to recruit and retain Aboriginal students; therefore, supports and admission policies, such as direct entry, are

in place to help meet these goals. Examples of ITEP supports are placing students in cohorts for their coursework and providing students with personal and professional support through ITEP staff during their practica. Through its unique program design, ITEP aims to help students develop holistically—intellectually, physically, emotionally, culturally, and spiritually (Wimmer et al., 2010).

Wimmer and colleagues' study (2010) drew on several paradigms for their research of the program, including Indigenous knowledge systems, postcolonial perspectives, and constructivism. They reported on the experiences of 30 ITEP graduates within their first two years of teaching. Participants were asked to reflect on their former practica to identify the issues and experiences they had in making the transition from university to the workplace. Overall, participants felt that ITEP had prepared them well for their field. Many of the graduates spoke positively about the cohort model and the “sense of family” that it created (Wimmer et al., 2010, p. 145). Participants stated that these new friendships were sustained and helped them with later transitioning into the field. Graduates expressed appreciation for smaller class sizes and their close relationships with supportive ITEP faculty and staff members who provided invaluable academic and personal advising. The participants also spoke highly of the culturally safe environment of the ITEP and how this spilled over into feeling pride as members of the larger university community. In spite of the interviewees' high level of satisfaction with the program, graduates repeatedly expressed a need for more field experiences in the program to help students better prepare for the politics and challenges of teaching within the band-controlled school system. Interviewees advocated for more hands-on experiences through longer and earlier practicum experiences. They also suggested that

field experiences could be interwoven into all courses through activities such as student visits to schools and other community sites. Additionally, study participants suggested the ITEP call on experienced teachers working with the band-controlled school system to act as guest speakers and co-instructors of courses to help students better prepare for the very practical and complex realities of working in the field.

Implications of the ITEP model for supporting Indigenous students in SCYC.

In this section I highlight lessons and ideas from the ITEP model that I believe can be applied to supporting Indigenous students in SCYC practicum. By building on the ITEP model, SCYC could create a program that responds holistically to the needs of Indigenous students and communities—a program that is relevant and culturally safe. The goals of the program would include creating a strong support network for students and pushing CYC practicum, practice, and theory forward in a reconciliatory direction. In this section I also provide further context about why *now*, at the University of Victoria, these ideas might have traction for the SCYC.

The ITEP model and Wimmer et al.'s (2010) study offer two very important lessons: (1) students' views must be included when designing programs and research; and (2) we must take a comprehensive view if we wish to transform programs with a decolonizing approach. The ITEP model offers a number of useful ideas for supports for Indigenous students that could be built upon in the UVic SCYC program. It is important that non-Indigenous students gain a deeper understanding of how we have arrived at this point in history and the ways in which “we are all differentially implicated” (SCYC Practicum Council, personal communication, March 13, 2015) in ongoing colonization. There is still a great deal for students, faculty, and staff within the SCYC to learn and we

must all be involved in creating positive change. Wimmer et al. (2010) make a strong point, supported by others in the field (e.g., Ralph et al., 2007, 2008, 2010), that recent graduates who have transitioned to the field are well positioned to offer valuable insights based on their lived experiences in the program. Current students can provide feedback on how practicum fits within the SCYC program, including curriculum as a whole—how the curriculum does or does not make sense. In the UVic SCYC, conversations have begun between the director and members of the Undergraduate Students Society—an important first step that can be expanded on. A second important lesson we can take from the ITEP model is that to be authentically inclusive of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students and culture, a *holistic* approach is needed, rather than simply a tweaking of the current practicum program or “add-ons” of support. Wimmer et al. (2010), drawing on the work of Canadian scholar Verna St. Denis, state:

St. Denis (2004) observed that there was not social equality between cultures, and that indigenous cultures were typically positioned at a lower status in society, at least as the dominant society perceived indigenous peoples. Although called places of *higher education*, we have observed that many university classrooms are a microcosm of the reality articulated by St. Denis. (p. 150)

Across the CYC program, legitimization of Indigenous culture and knowledges, Aboriginal students’ needs for kinship, and SCYC relationships with local First Nations communities all should be closely examined. The ITEP cohort model for course work and practicum offers a positive means to build in support and counteract Indigenous students’ sense of isolation (Van der Wey, 2007; Wimmer et al., 2010).

We are at a unique turning point in history and I would like to recognize the ways in which the SCYC is currently well positioned to act on improving supports to Indigenous students. First, the University of Victoria, through its strategic plan (University of Victoria Planning and Priorities Committee, 2012), has expressed commitment for improving graduation rates of Indigenous students and to continue building strong relationships with local Indigenous communities. Building on the strategic plan, the university recently drafted a comprehensive Indigenous academic plan for 2016 to 2021 (University of Victoria, 2016b). The drafted plan provides a vision that includes a wide range of goals and objectives in support of creating a sense of place for UVic Indigenous students, faculty, and staff; strengthening Indigenous scholarship; improving student funding; and providing a wider array of Indigenous courses and programs. The Indigenous academic plan signals the university's intentions to make radical, expansive, and welcomed changes. Coinciding with the drafting of the Indigenous academic plan in 2012 was the recent release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (2015) *Calls for Action*. Among the 94 calls for action, several are aimed at postsecondary institutions, including (1) closing the educational gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students within one generation, and (2) developing "culturally appropriate curricula" (p. 2) ensuring that graduates who work in child welfare (e.g., child protection stream of CYC) have training "about the history and impacts of residential schools" (p. 1). At the University of Victoria, the Office of Indigenous Affairs, through the First Peoples' House and LE,NONET, offers a wide spectrum of supports for Indigenous students, including programs and cultural events. The exceptional staff of the First Peoples' House are dedicated to creating a culturally

safe and inviting atmosphere for students of all Nations, coming together from all faculties across the UVic campus. Additionally, the Faculty of Human and Social Development (HSD) has placed a priority on advancing Indigenous student success. The HSD Indigenous Student Support Centre offers academic and emotional support for on- and off-campus Indigenous students. The supports offered include talking circles, social events, and connections to Elders.

I believe the time has long since come for university-wide, authentic, sustained, comprehensive, and far-reaching change. Many positive changes have begun at UVic, but more can be done to integrate a decolonizing approach across courses, including practicum. It is time to take seriously the need to honour the traditional heritage of this land by making universities relevant and inclusive spaces for Indigenous students and communities. In doing so, the ITEP provides a useful exemplar for a desire-based way forward. For the SCYC and the university at large, finding the way through our complicated entanglement with colonial histories will not be easy, and it will require finding the balance between honouring Indigenous knowledge without appropriating, and creating safe learning spaces for Indigenous students without “othering.” As scholar Jeannie Kerr (2014) remarks, “colonial dominance is most often hidden from educational conversations in the Canadian context, behind a benevolent and multicultural façade that ignores the history and current reality of settler violence and the ongoing occupation of Indigenous territories” (pp. 101–102). For SCYC practicum, the way forward will be to boldly reconceptualize all facets of the CYC program.

The Scottish Academic Advisors Demonstration Project.

As stated earlier, a common challenge for practicum coordinators is finding sufficient placement sites for students. One reason that potential practicum supervisors often turn down practicum students is because they feel stretched to find the time to meet with students for feedback, provide guidance for course assignments, meet with the practicum instructor, and critically reflect on practice with the practicum student. From the Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education, the Academic Advisors Program Demonstration Project provides an alternative to the traditional model of practicum supervision to alleviate the amount of time that practicum supervisors must invest. As the same time, the demonstration project provides an exciting possibility for building localized and generative communities of learning for student peer groups and practicum site staff to help bridge the perceived gap between practice theory and coursework theory.

Between 2003 and 2005, the Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education funded a nationwide study, Learning for Effective and Ethical Practice (LEEP), with the goal of improving social work education in Scotland (Munro, 2005). As part of this national study, the University of Edinburgh partnered with Glasgow Caledonian University to evaluate and improve integration of learning in social work education in Scotland (Clapton et al., 2006, 2008; Clapton & Forbes, 2009; Munro, 2005). This LEEP 1.1 project comprised (1) an audit of practice learning—conducted through a survey distributed to practice instructors and service providers (Clapton et al., 2006); (2) a literature review which focused on social work students' integration of learning in practice and readiness for practice (Clapton & Cree, 2004); and (3) a

demonstration project which focused on enhancing students' integration of learning in practicum by expanding the role of academic advisors (Clapton et al., 2008; Munro, 2005). This section focuses on results from the demonstration sites and includes an overview of the academic advisors project, as well as the benefits, challenges, and recommendations identified through the project evaluation (Munro, 2005).

The Academic Advisors Demonstration Project was conducted at six different sites in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Midlothian between April and December 2004 (Clapton et al., 2008; Munro, 2005). The project was planned on the basis of findings from the literature review and the practice audit which indicated "an unhelpful gap between the academic and practice components of the student social workers' programme" (Clapton et al., 2009, p. 8). The aim of the project was to create greater support for students who were on their first social work practicum placement. Thus, the roles of six "lecturers / tutors" (Clapton et al., 2008, p. 336) were expanded to those of on-site practicum "academic advisors" for students who were grouped together geographically. Although there was variation between sites, generally, each academic advisor was assigned a group of six to eight students (totalling 39 students) who were on placement in various settings (Munro, 2005). The advisor spent one day per week in the field meeting with students and practicum agency staff, which generally included a group meeting with students. Advisors were not given a blueprint, but were instead told to base their role on the needs of students and agencies and their own professional interests (Clapton et al., 2008, p. 336). The academic advisors met with students for teaching sessions, participated in three-way meetings with students and their practicum mentors, and worked with

practicum agency staff, for example, sharing research and literature and conducting professional development (Clapton et al., 2008).

Results of Munro's (2005) demonstration project evaluation, based on interview and survey responses from students, academic advisors, and agency staff, were largely positive. Stakeholders responded that they valued the support of students' learning through group work. Students highly valued the peer support they experienced as well as the informal support they also received from academic advisors. As Munro (2005) summarized,

the main positive aspects of the Demonstration Projects from the participants' points of view were the Academic Advisors proximity to the students and to the agencies, the supportive collaborative relationship that developed between agencies and universities and the additional support that the Academic Advisors were able to provide for students. . . . Indeed, all but one of the Practice Teachers, and all of the key staff interviewed expressed a desire to continue the Academic Advisor roles within their agencies (if it could be resourced). (p. 10)

Although the evaluation results from the demonstration projects were largely positive, logistical challenges were identified. A primary challenge was the very tight timeline for planning and implementing the project. Participants stated that academic advisors' roles were not being well defined, which caused confusion (Munro, 2005). However, it should be noted that one of the project's broad aims was for academic advisors to gain understanding of how their roles might be *developed*, rather than starting with prescribed objectives. In this respect, the project aims were met. Academic advisors

stated that they developed greater clarity about the specific features of their role that were most helpful over the course of the project. Another major challenge for the academic advisors was that their roles were greatly expanded during this project, which also increased the workload.

Based on the evaluation results of the LEEP demonstration projects, Munro (2005) made the following recommendations: (1) that social work programs employ academic advisors/tutors and provide group supervision to practicum students to provide students with peer support; (2) that academic advisors/tutors work in partnership with agencies while students are on placement; (3) that forums be created to enhance partnerships between agencies and with the university, with all members having input into developing curriculum; (4) that academic advisors/tutors be allocated more time to fulfill their roles. Overall, the Academic Advisors Demonstration Project offers an innovative means to bring practice and coursework, as well as communities and universities, together. As Clapton and colleagues (2008) state,

if lecturers and tutors are able to develop an active and regular presence in service agencies, then they may find that they have something to contribute to activities such as community development and neighbourhood forums. . . . Perhaps more modestly, work on this project has taught us that a collegiate model can and ought to emerge centered around the student's practice learning. (p. 339)

Implications of the Scottish Academic Advisors Demonstration Project for SCYC.

If the goal for the UVic SCYC is to develop vibrant communities of practice among CYC students and strong landscapes of practice with community and university partners, the LEEP demonstration project is an intriguing exemplar. A particular challenge for the SCYC is that many students live outside of the UVic area and the practicum program is delivered through distance education. However, perhaps a pilot project in a selected community could be implemented as a first step, with students, advisors, and practicum site staff meeting face to face. Applying the model to the SCYC, practicum students could be grouped together geographically or by specialty stream to engage in critically reflecting on practice by meeting weekly at a central practice site with an academic advisor/tutor. Practicum instructors within the SCYC come from a diversity of field experiences, which they combine with specific research and scholarly interests and experiences. Agency staff are immersed in the day-to-day realities of practice. Bringing practicum instructors or advisors onsite to agencies provides great potential for capacity building of agencies, students, communities, and the SCYC by combining resources. Students grouped together from different agencies or programs would have greater opportunity to learn more about each other's agencies through weekly group conferences. As well, having university faculty or staff on site at agencies has the potential of building greater trust and understanding and more valuable relationships between the two. As highlighted in the LEEP project evaluation, unless extra funding is provided, or SCYC administration can creatively shift resources, practicum course instructors and practicum coordinators are unlikely to have time within their existing

schedules to spend one day each week in the field. However, I wonder whether other options might be available, such as contracting CYC graduate students to act as teaching assistants / field-based advisors? Indeed, for graduate students this would offer a most interesting learning opportunity as a graduate-level practicum or internship.

Back in Canada, I see a parallel between the LEEP demonstration project and research/inquiry work that is taking place at my work site at a university-based early years centre. For the past six years a CYC faculty member and two CYC graduate students have worked alongside our early childhood educators (ECEs) as research partners in our child care centres. Funding for our SCYC research partners comes from a department within the division of Student Affairs. The research questions that educators and CYC research partners choose to jointly explore emerge from the interests of our staff, observations of the children's interests, and the research interests of the faculty member and the graduate students. On a weekly basis, inquiries among children, staff, and research partners are co-constructed through provocations that allow all involved to actively explore the research questions. CYC research partners meet with staff to further explore research questions by critically reflecting together. Four or five times per year, the CYC research team organizes evening seminars for the staff where we discuss readings that come from multiple disciplines and occasionally have guest speakers, present pedagogical narrations, and critically reflect together on inquiry work and practice in general. While our CYC research work differs from the LEEP demonstration project, given that it was not developed to support practica, it also is similar in that it brings the academy and practice together to work through emergent concerns and providing highly meaningful on-site professional development to staff. Our CYC

partnership has not only transformed early childhood educator practice in our centres, it has also positively transformed how our educators *feel* about practice.

The Scottish LEEP demonstration project evaluation highlights the need to strike a balance between tutors having well-defined roles for community-engaged advisors while also making room for advisors to have flexibility and adaptability to allow their roles to emerge based on the particular needs of students and agency staff. Given the diversity of CYC settings, including various social, political, cultural, and geographical locations, age groups of children, and CYC specialty streams, careful thought would need to be given on how students might be grouped. However, as the SYCY Practicum Council has discussed, transforming the CYC practicum program will likely need to begin with small “pockets of change” (SCYC Practicum Council, personal communication, February 16, 2015). Within my own workplace, we recently conducted a pilot project, grouping together early years practicum students from the UVic SCYC program and the local college in on-site weekly meetings with a practicum advisor. Although we did not formally evaluate the program, students anecdotally reported that they felt more supported than in previous practica and learned a great deal from hearing about one another’s experiences. In our pilot project, students from different stages in the CYC program were grouped together, providing a rich diversity of experiences and a localized community of practice.

A community-based hub model for social work.

In a previous section I outlined the neoliberal tensions that have been identified in social work education between mainstream practice and more radical, postfoundational social work curriculum. George, Silver, and Preston (2013), faculty members in the

School of Social Work at Ryerson University, take up this argument in advocating for change with a service-learning model for practicum. The authors build a strong argument for politicizing and contextualizing field education by realigning it to community needs. They propose a community hub model for practicum that would see faculty, students, practicum coordinators, and community members participating actively in a social change initiative through the School of Social Work. In this practicum reconceptualization, the authors propose placing practicum at the centre of program curriculum. This would involve a shift away from the traditional agency-based practicum placement model. Drawing on the work of Giroux (2010) and Habermas (1989), the authors reconceptualize the university field education office as the community hub office—a “public sphere” (George et al., 2013, p. 650) of sorts. The field education office would become the place for “community members and academics to meet and deliberate on contemporary social issues and explore ways of taking action on these issues” (George et al., 2013, p. 650). This would require repositioning the roles of practicum instructors, who would assume a stronger liaison role with community. Practicum coordinators’ roles would also shift “beyond bridging to mobilization and social transformation” (George et al., 2013, p. 650). Students’ roles would also alter and students would become active co-creators of their practicum opportunities. To illustrate this restructured practicum model, George et al. (2013) provide an example. It begins with the social work field education office coordinating consultations with community members and agencies to identify needs and concerns. From these consultations, a specific community need, such as improving food security for new immigrants, would be chosen. Community members and agencies would form an alliance with practicum coordinators and faculty members to

develop an action plan, which would be broken down into specific tasks and roles for practicum students. George et al. (2013) suggest that practica would include students from all years of the BSW and MSW programs as part of the alliance, working either individually or in small teams. Practicum sites would be varied and include grassroots agencies, government offices, and social service agencies. Responsibilities for practicum students might include working with food banks and health services, advocating for political change, conducting research, and networking with other agencies. The field education coordinators and instructors, as central members of the hub, would coordinate efforts and track progress toward the project's overall goals.

While George, Silver, and Preston's (2013) community model has not yet been put into practice, this vision of practicum is useful in opening up spaces for us to rethink ways in which practicum and practice might be realigned and made more meaningful for students, faculty, agencies, and, particularly, communities.

Implications of the community hub model for SCYC.

It is important to acknowledge that child and youth care has its own unique identity and is not social work. Therefore, the description of mainstream neoliberal-founded practice outlined in George, Silver, and Preston's (2013) article does not necessarily apply to our field. However, aspects of the authors' argument certainly resonate, including the desire of SCYC Practicum Council members to reimagine practicum from the collective ethics of being "dynamic, provocative, and responsive" as well as "collaborative and joyful in the creation of alternatives" (SCYC Practicum Council, personal communication, March 13, 2015). The community hub model offers a means of responding, through practica, to the shifting ethical, political, institutional, and

cultural landscape by repositioning faculty, practicum coordinators, practicum mentors, and students as agents of social change. Within the vibrant landscape of practice of a SCYC community hub model, practicum coordinators, instructors, and CYC graduate students would act as “systems conveners” (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 99) whose roles involve “unlocking unexplored spaces, forging promising partnerships, building bridges, resetting boundaries, challenging established colonies, and creating new settlements” (p. 100). Students would have great potential to learn about building relationships with community partners, opening up spaces for dialogue with multiple stakeholders, and creating proposals and action plans.

On a practical level, the community hub model has the potential benefit of addressing the shortage of practicum placements, given that it has the potential to *create* placements. A challenge of this model for the UVic SCYC would be how to include CYC students who live outside of the Greater Victoria area. One possibility might be to group together students geographically and locate local leaders to work with instructors to organize, mobilize, and support the small pockets of students to work collaboratively toward common community initiatives. Given the range of practice streams in child and youth care, as well as the geographical distance between students, a one-size fits all approach is not appropriate for the SCYC practicum program and rather a number of flexible options is needed.

As in practice, the double-edged nature of an emergent course such as the community hub model is that its path cannot be completely predicted in advance. However, George and colleagues’ model does offer rich and very practical learning possibilities for the SCYC to build on that would inspire students to be creative,

innovative, and resourceful and to effect community change. In Chapter 1 I wrote about Jennifer White's call to action for creating a 21st-century ethos for CYC. With such an ethos in place, I suggest that a SCYC community hub model would allow CYC students and faculty to continue to live our way into the questions of how we construct children, youth, and families, what counts as CYC "problems" and whether CYC can exist in the absence of "problems," how we think about differences in CYC, and how we construct professionalization in CYC.

Situated learning in social work education.

In this section I outline a non-practicum course that draws on situated learning, aligning students with the needs of their community. Edmonds-Cady and Sosulski (2012) are social work faculty members from two universities in the US Midwest who teach two unique upper-level undergraduate social work courses that parallel one another. The purpose of both courses is to provide students with an authentic situated learning opportunity that builds communities of practice for students while teaching them about socially just community work. The courses move students out of the lecture hall and into communities. Based on their experiences in teaching their courses, Edmonds-Cady and Sosulski (2012) state:

Offering inventive and transformative experiential opportunities based on real social problems helps students learn to seek diverse perspectives in the communities where they work and challenges them to use their prior knowledge in new ways to make connections between micro-level practice, social policy, and community practice. (p. 46)

The courses differ from both service-learning and practicum experiences in that students must design their own “macro experience” (Edmonds-Cady & Sosulski, 2012, p. 46) by consulting with community members at the grassroots level. An important learning outcome is for students to develop heightened awareness of their social locations and the ways in which privilege, diversity, and oppression play out in communities. A goal of both courses is to blend students’ experiential learning about their communities, based on the narratives of community members, within the context of the practice and research literature and to problem-solve ways of addressing specific community needs.

Edmonds-Cady and Sosulski (2012) report that the courses are held as weekly seminars and include lectures, discussion of readings, student group work, skill-building activities, and presentations and guest presentations given by grassroots activists. The coursework begins by students forming small groups and identifying a broad community issue that interests them. The students then move out into the community to locate, develop relationships with, and consult with “indigenous experts” (Edmonds-Cady & Sosulski, 2012, p. 51)—those who have firsthand knowledge and are affected by particular community needs. The course instructors state that they have worked to establish relationships within their local communities so that they can provide access points for students, thus decreasing the level of instructor supervision that is required. However, students are also encouraged to locate harder-to-reach populations and are coached on how to do so with “humility and respect, rather than fear” (Edmonds-Cady & Sosulski, 2012, p. 61). Practitioners form part of the students’ community of practice and serve as mentors. However, students are cautioned to not rely on practitioners or other forms of institutionalized knowledge, but rather to build knowledge from community

members and from one another. Once students have identified and problematized a social issue and conducted a community assessment, they research and select a model of social change, then design a detailed community action plan that incorporates stakeholders' perspectives, resources, potential areas of conflict, budget, etc. Throughout this planning process, instructors stress the importance of students consulting with community members through all stages so that the plan is developed from the bottom up rather than the top down. Edmonds-Cady and Sosulski (2012) explain:

The importance of first partnering with local individuals who have unique knowledge of the phenomenon is one of the most difficult concepts for our students to grasp. We spend a great deal of time in class slowing our students down from their attempts to solve a problem that they themselves have determined is a pressing need. (p. 58)

Course instructors provide feedback about the plan, including its predicted feasibility and sustainability. In the final stage, students implement their projects and, for one of the two courses, students also complete a grant-writing assignment. Throughout the course, in an effort to evaluate authentically, instructors request feedback from community members about students' progress.

Implications of community-based situated learning for SCYC.

In taking up Edmonds-Cady and Sosulski's conceptualization and applying it to the SCYC, I wonder what opportunities exist to embed politicized community work within courses outside of practicum? Not every practicum experience is going to provide CYC students with the opportunity to design a project from the grassroots level up. The skills gained through such a process, however, are fundamentally important and practical.

No matter what setting or specialty stream CYC graduates choose, graduates of the program need to approach community “problems” through critical perspectives, understanding that problems are actively constructed. Graduates need to have the skills to listen carefully to the needs of others to co-construct programs with community members. CYC graduates need to know how to advocate for clients within their own practice settings, with government agencies, and in the wider community. From a practical standpoint, CYC graduates need to know how to design feasible and sustainable programs and secure funding, including applying for grants. An additional benefit of embedding community work into coursework outside of practicum is that it creates opportunities for meaningful community engagement between the SCYC and the wider community. However, as a starting place with such a course, faculty must have at least some connections with community already in place. Such a course suits an instructor who already has a breadth of experience in working in the local community. Another possibility is to have CYC graduate students work as teaching assistants in the course to work with the small groups. Thus, the teaching assistants could provide links for the students with their own community contacts and also provide supervision and mentorship as students work through the process of designing their community projects. For SCYC distance education students who do not live in the UVic area, perhaps there are possibilities for grouping students together in their communities. Using established contacts from within SCYC, perhaps local mentors could be identified to guide small groups of students through the process and provide feedback. I believe that building on Edmonds-Cady and Sosulski’s model within the SCYC offers interesting possibilities for

undergraduate students for strengthening their skills and increasing their understanding of community work and the change process.

The University of Oregon’s BOOST preschool program.

At the University of Oregon, the Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) program has implemented a unique community service-learning project that benefits the local community while also providing master’s level students with authentic and rich practicum experiences. The EI/ECSE faculty has founded the Building on Opportunities for Student Teaching and Learning (BOOST) program—an early intervention program for 3- to 5-year-olds. BOOST is founded on the principle of “l’arte d’arrangiarsi,” an Italian phrase that means “the art of creating something from nothing” (Macy & Squires, 2009, p. 308). During the summer months, graduate students coordinate and operate the five-week-long early intervention. The program has been operating for 10 years now, initially from one location on the campus, and recently has added a second community-based location. The program recruits families who are already receiving services for their children, targeting families who have children with extra support needs or families transitioning between homes (University of Oregon College of Education Early Intervention Program, 2013). The intention of BOOST is to provide high-quality summer programming for children who would not otherwise have this opportunity and for the early MA students to experience building a program from the ground up.

Macy and Squires (2009) reported on their evaluation of the BOOST practicum conducted in spring and summer of 2005. Ten MA students participated and implemented five weeks of programming for 11 children. The authors state that intended learning

outcomes for the practicum students included learning program development and evaluation skills. As part of their coursework prior to the BOOST practicum, students completed preliminary planning for the program, including establishing the philosophy and pedagogy, deciding on roles for each student, designing the program environment, determining family supports through conducting home visits with the families, developing the program evaluation tools, and creating the implementation schedule. The students took responsibility for all areas of the program, including applying for grants for funding (after attending a grant-writing workshop). Students submitted resumés to apply for their requested positions in the program and were interviewed by a nonpartisan panel. Two EI/ECSE faculty members provided overall supervision of the program and attended team meetings, which included intra-agency meetings. Three doctoral students provided direct supervision on site and during family home visits. For Macy and Squires's (2009) study, various evaluation measures were used to assess students' self-efficacy, professional practice skills, collaboration, family-centred practices, and child outcomes. The researchers' four guiding evaluation questions were as follows:

1. Does the BOOST program, developed and implemented by the student teachers, meet Division for Early Childhood (DEC) recommended practice standards?
2. To what extent do student teachers meet university training program competencies when developing and implementing BOOST?
3. Are families satisfied with the BOOST program?
4. Do preschool-age children, who are enrolled in BOOST, demonstrate developmental outcomes? (Macy & Squires, 2009, p. 309)

The results of the evaluation process were positive, demonstrating developmental gains for the children, high satisfaction ratings by families, and increased competencies for practicum students. In particular, students reported that the BOOST practicum experience had greatly enhanced their skills in the areas of program development and evaluation. The students also rated themselves very highly in team collaboration skills, which Macy and Squires (2009) attribute to the significant amount of time that the students spent together, not only working together in the BOOST program, but also in their prior coursework.

Implications of the BOOST program for SCYC.

The BOOST program provides a general model of community service-learning for the SCYC to consider beyond early years settings. Such a practicum/service-learning model could help address the shortage of CYC practicum sites by creating new practicum opportunities, provide an authentic and very practical experience for students in program development and administration, and realign the relationship between SCYC and the community while also filling a community need. Grouping undergraduate students to work together in providing a community service for children, youth, and families provides rich opportunities for students to build collaborative skills within a community of practice—skills that are essential to our work as team members in work placements. Pairing undergraduate and graduate CYC students within a landscape of practice opens up even more possibilities by complexifying the knowledges brought to the program. Drawing on an example from the early years field, in early childhood settings, practitioners most often work as members of a team in the classroom. In fact, collaboration is a critical aspect of the Reggio Emilia pedagogy—a pedagogy that has

gained increasing popularity among early childhood educators. A strong element of the success of the Reggio Emilia approach lies in strong teacher collaboration and partnerships (Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 2012). Teaching is seen as a collaborative activity in which educators critically reflect together on practice and work together in pairs in the child care centres. Beyond the classroom, teachers and other Reggio Emilia staff form “collectives”—working groups that include parents and other community stakeholders—to reflect on practice. The belief is that everyone at Reggio Emilia is part of the community and must be included. As CYC professionals, no matter the setting we must know how to communicate effectively within our teams and with others across our landscape of practice—supporting one another, airing dissenting opinions respectfully, and soliciting and providing feedback. The BOOST program provides a useful site for building skills such as collaborating within a team, curriculum planning and assessment, project coordination, administration, budgeting, grant proposal writing, etc.

With the SCYC, can a practicum be designed that allows students to group together to design a program, with the support of graduate student tutors and instructors, to meet a community need? For example, within the Greater Victoria area, perhaps students could run an affordable recreationally based summer camp program for children from low-income families? Might it be possible for the SCYC to partner with existing services at UVic, such as the Vikes camps, to create a satellite program? What are the prospects for the SCYC and students to co-create an authentic practicum/service-learning program?

The Hartford Partnership Program for Aging Education.

Within the United States, one of the most widely successful, innovative, and long-standing practicum programs is the Hartford Partnership Program for Aging Education (HPPAE, formerly known as the Practicum Partners Project). This MSW education program draws together faculty members and community partners into localized consortia—highly effective landscapes of practice—centred on improving care for the elderly while also transforming student learning through an innovative approach to social work practica (Lawrance et al., 2007). The John A. Hartford Foundation has been funding this unique program since 1998 to address the needs of the rapidly growing aging population in the US and the anticipated critical shortage of geriatric-trained social workers. The goals of the HPPAE program are twofold: (1) to increase the number of graduate-level social workers qualified in geriatric care; and (2) to improve services to seniors through practica and partnerships between universities and their local communities (Mertz, Fortune, & Zendell, 2007). HPPAE is an initiative of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), initially through the Social Work Leadership Institute but now administered by the National Center for Gerontological Social Work Education (Council on Social Work Education, 2016). Initially, six university-based program demonstration sites were funded from 1999 to 2004 and 323 MSW students participated (Lawrance et al., 2007). Based on the highly positive evaluation results from the demonstration sites, the program has now grown to more than 70 graduate social work programs (Greenfield, Morton, Birkenmaier, & Rowan, 2013). In this section, I review the literature that focuses on evaluation results from the six demonstration sites. I provide an overview of the HPPAE program, including benefits and challenges, and I summarize

the experiences reported by students, faculty, and community members. The evaluation methods of HPPAE demonstration sites included focus groups with field instructors and interns, individual interviews with community partners, student pre- and posttests of core competencies, post-graduation surveys of students' interest in the geriatric field, and surveys of students' satisfaction with the program (Mertz et al., 2007; Social Work Leadership Institute, Hartford Partnership Program for Aging Education, 2013; Zendell, Fortune, Mertz, & Koelewyn, 2007).

The HPPAE program comprises five key components: (1) university-community partnerships; (2) social work education focused on core competencies, which guide the planning for student learning goals and experiences; (3) practica that include students rotating through a variety of field work experiences that span the continuum of gerontological care; (4) field instructors' expanded roles, including their participation on the consortium, teaching selected areas of the curriculum, consultation, and overseeing practicum students across field work sites; and (5) targeted student recruitment (Lawrance et al., 2007). Initially, HPPAE provided funding to the six demonstration sites for four years: one year of planning and an additional three years for project implementation. Each of the six demonstration sites assembled a consortium composed of at least one graduate social work program and five key community agencies spanning the continuum of gerontological care (Lawrance et al., 2007). Community agencies were carefully selected, beginning with those agencies that had long-standing relationships with the university. Consortia members then identified and invited additional agencies that could offer key learning opportunities to students and help sustain the partnership (Zendell et al., 2007). The focus for consortia in the first year was on assessing the local

community's demographics, needs, and the current services being offered, then setting goals which included developing a list of core student competencies (Zendell et al., 2007). During the planning stage, each consortium made key decisions that included choosing a framework to guide the partnership and deciding whom to include as members, goals and objectives of the consortium and sub-committees, and roles of members. During the subsequent three years, the demonstration sites implemented and evaluated their programs.

A unique aspect of the HPPAE program is the high level of collaboration between universities and their community partners (Funderburk, Damron-Rodriguez, & Simmons, 2006; Lawrance et al., 2007; Zendell et al., 2007), which included a number of important elements. Primarily, partners were united in their desire to co-create new services and social work roles. In the planning stage, each consortium selected a guiding framework and mission that all members of the partnership supported. As one example, at the University of Albany demonstration site, consortium members selected and then modified Bronstein's (2003) interdisciplinary collaboration framework (Zendell et al., 2007). The components of this framework were "(1) fostering interdependence between the university and agencies in the partnership, (2) creating new professional activities in field sites, (3) promoting flexibility in education and field, (4) fostering collective ownership of goals, and (5) joint reflection on processes" (Zendell et al., 2007, p. 160). At all demonstration sites, the universities took the lead role given that they were the funding recipients; however, leadership on the consortia and committees was shared equally by faculty and community members (Mertz et al., 2007). Consortia decision making was consensus based and community members were involved in all aspects of the

program, including cochairing consortia and committees and developing “curriculum, field rotations, supervision, governance, and sustainability” (Zendell et al., 2007, p. 160).

Zendell and colleagues (2007) reported that

input from agency representatives into classroom learning and input from university representatives into innovative intern learning opportunities with the field placement led to a deep sense of equality between university and agency representatives and increased flexibility in both class and field. (p. 161)

As previously stated, a landscape of practice includes points of connection but also areas of contested terrain, and this was true for HPPAE partnerships as well. While there are many advantages for universities and communities in pooling resources for mutual benefit, tensions in HPPAE partnerships did arise occasionally due to structural inequalities and issues of trust (Mertz et al., 2007; Zendell et al., 2007). Fisher, Fabricant, and Simmons (2004) write about the contemporary historical-social-political context of university-community engagement, and note:

Universities aspire toward an expertise . . . which is often theoretical, global, technical, and formalized. Residents of local communities, however, construct their expertise from the experiential or local, often non-technical and informal information that coheres about their lived experience. Critically, the knowledge that is more often ascribed value is that which accrues to the university and its faculty. This imbalance can mute or silence community voice in such collaboration. (p. 29)

Adding to the complexity, community partners who worked together on consortia or committees sometimes had competing agendas (Zendell et al., 2007). In spite of these challenges, a hallmark of HPPAE was the overall effectiveness of the partnerships (Funderburk et al., 2006; Lawrance et al., 2007; Zendell et al., 2007). Zendell and colleagues (2007) report that the university served a valuable role as the “impartial broker” (p. 164) in the partnership. Over time, partners within the consortia came to learn more about the services of the various agencies, and community capacity was strengthened. In cross-site focus groups conducted by Lawrance et al. (2007), the following factors were identified by consortia members as key to the success of their partnerships: (1) “*visionary leadership in university and agency*”; (2) the program “built upon *preexisting relationships* between the graduate education programs and agencies”; (3) “*a strong sense of camaraderie and commitment to geriatric social work*”; and (4) “*the value of Hartford funding,*” which allowed small or remotely located agencies to pay students stipends during practicum (p. 148, italics in original). Partner agency members reported a number of benefits to their participation, including increased knowledge, improved collaboration across agencies, more mutual referrals, assistance with grant funding, and learning evaluation skills (Zendell et al., 2007). At the end of the first three years of implementation, community partners reported that challenges to the success of the program were (1) difficulties with scheduling and coordinating the rotational model of field work, (2) a shortage of faculty trained in gerontological social work, and (3) lack of time for practicum supervisors, who often had challenging responsibilities to meet. In spite of these challenges, at the close of the first three years of implementation, the

HPPAE program was seen as highly effective and consortium members strongly supported expansion to new sites (Lawrance et al., 2007).

A great strength of the HPPAE program is students' rotation through a wide variety of practice sites.² Traditionally, MSW students are placed in year-long practica with one-on-one supervision. In contrast, the rotational model was chosen to provide students with a rich diversity of experiences, clients, settings, and supervisors within the geriatric social work field (Ivry, Lawrance, Damron-Rodriguez, & Cooke Robbins, 2005). Additionally, all agencies in the demonstration sites held seminars on site for all students, which were focused on specific topics not otherwise covered in the curriculum. In the HPPAE model, all students had a primary practicum setting and a field advisor who monitored the student's progress across sites, working with field instructors to design rotations that aligned with the student's learning goals (Ivry et al., 2005; Mertz et al., 2007). The rotational model had some challenging aspects for practicum coordinators and students, including difficulty with scheduling and coordinating the rotations. However, in a survey of 190 students, "an overwhelming majority" of students reported high levels of satisfaction with the rotational model and stated they would recommend the HPPAE program to others (Ivry et al., 2005, p. 420). Students reported that the program provided them with a wide array of field experiences that gave them greater context for geriatric care, including exposure to many agencies and ways of doing things, as well as to a range of clients (Lawrance et al., 2007). Field instructors and agency staff reported that students gained broad-based knowledge of geriatric care and "were better

² For detailed information regarding the fieldwork rotation plans at each demonstration site, Ivry, Lawrance, Damron-Rodriguez, and Cooke Robbins (2005) provide an excellent, in-depth account.

able to comprehend the service delivery system and ‘see the big picture,’ including service gaps” (Mertz et al., 2007, p. 182).

In cross-site evaluations conducted with students and agency personnel, the benefits of the HPPAE program were seen to greatly outweigh the challenges (Lawrance et al., 2007; Zendell et al., 2007). Initial challenges included the complex scheduling of practicum rotations, lack of trained faculty members in the geriatric field to guide the partnership groups, and the ubiquitous struggles of field instructors to find the extra time for supervising students while also meeting their other job responsibilities (Lawrance et al., 2007). Overall, however, partners reported that community-university collaborations were fulfilling and transformative.

There is no question that HPPAE has transformed geriatric social work education in the US. As summed up by Mertz, Fortune, and Zendell (2007), “when agencies, field instructors and students are given the freedom and impetus to ‘think outside of the box’ about student learning experiences and agency/client needs, exciting projects and opportunities emerge” (p. 185).

Implications of HPPAE for SCYC.

Although the HPPAE program does not have direct applicability to undergraduate CYC education, it presents a very useful framework for transforming practicum by enhancing relationships between community partners and the university through a practica consortium. It must be noted that elements of the SCYC practicum program pose particular challenges for a framework such as HPPAE. A primary challenge is the high number of students who undertake a CYC practicum each year, as well as the breadth of CYC streams and practice settings. A great strength of the HPPAE program is that

practicum is tailored for students' specific learning needs, is supervised across sites, and is coordinated by a primary advisor assigned for each student. Without additional funding for the SCYC practicum program, it would be impossible for CYC practicum coordinators and instructors to provide this level of individualized support within an undergraduate program. However, there are many aspects of the HPPAE program from which we can draw, and I would like to focus here on the HPPAE model for consortia as a means of building a strong landscape of practice for SCYC practicum. As stated in the HPPAE literature, to sustain commitment in university-community partnerships, all members of the consortia and committees must feel motivated for change and united in the mission, goals, and objectives of the group (Mertz et al., 2007; Zendell et al., 2007). While there are some parallels between the HPPAE-style consortium and the SCYC Practicum Council, in comparison, the HPPAE consortium includes a greater level of community participation. As Mertz et al. (2007) state, university-community partnerships typically exist to benefit the university and not the community, whereas the goal of HPPAE consortia is to "genuinely share leadership with agency partners" (p. 185). I believe the starting place should be drawing on the collective ethics work previously done through the Practicum Council and then creating a 21st-century CYC ethos that reconsiders how we construct children, youth, families and communities and ourselves, as CYC professionals (J. White, 2015). Forming a generative SCYC consortium is complexified by the multiplicities that are CYC. We do not come from one starting place, but from many. However, I believe that partnering community and SCYC together in a consortium is an important first step for engaging all stakeholders, politicizing both practice and practicum, and setting the compass for a more unified path for SCYC.

The rural practicum.

Canada is a highly diverse country geographically and demographically, comprised of both urban *and* rural communities—each community with its own distinct history(ies) and culture(s). Given that postsecondary institutions are based in urban centres, practicum sites are most often urban as well, which can lead to a risk of students' views of practice becoming metrocentric. According to national census data collected in 2011, a notable 18.9 percent of Canadians live in rural areas—defined as having populations of less than 1,000 and a population density of less than 400 people per square kilometre (Statistics Canada, 2012). In spite of the fact that the world population is becoming increasingly urbanized, half of the world population remains rural (United Nations Habitat, 2010). Within Canada, the rural population is sizeable at 6.3 million inhabitants (Statistics Canada, 2012). Rural communities often suffer from a shortage of trained professionals who have understanding and sensitivity of the unique culture of the local community (Ralph et al., 2010). Traditionally, the most often-stated goal of rural practica has been to fill this niche by educating students about the needs, strengths, and challenges of a rural community with the hope that students will later return to these communities to work as trained professionals (Jones, 2011; Kline, White, & Lock, 2013; Ralph & Walker, 2012). Despite the growing body of literature on practicum, few studies specifically address rural practicum (Ralph & Walker, 2012). In this section I consider the possibilities for rural-based practica for CYC. I draw primarily on three studies that report on the experiences of preservice teachers in rural internships or practicum: (1) Ralph and Walker's (2012) report on preservice teachers' post-practicum experiences in western Canada; (2) Jones's (2011) report on students' reflections on their short-term,

four- to five-day practica in Alaska; and finally (3) Australian scholars Kline, White, and Lock's (2013) report on a large national study that assessed students' support from their universities and practicum communities during their rural or regionally based practica.

In reviewing studies on rural practicum, common themes emerge. Preservice teachers who have experienced rural practica have reported a number of advantages in comparison to urban practica, including experiencing a stronger sense of community, receiving support from staff and the community, developing closer relationships with their students and families, finding more affordable accommodations, and experiencing a wider range of teaching opportunities (Gerard, Lapointe, Ralph, & Walker, 2013; Jones, 2011; Kline et al., 2013; Ralph & Walker, 2012). Post-practicum students reported disadvantages to rural practica as well, including loneliness and isolation from family and friends, a sense of being "outsiders," fewer resources and less support available for their practicum as well as their profession in the rural community, increased expenses for commuting to and accommodations in the rural community, and a lack of privacy (Gerard et al., 2013; Jones, 2011; Kline et al., 2013; Ralph & Walker, 2012). Pierce and Schmidt (2012), in writing about rural social work practica, suggest that students prepare "to address issues of visibility, dual relationships, and 'outsider' complexities" (p. 237); while Collier (2006) suggests that they prepare to be generalists instead of specialists. In a national study of 263 post-practicum students, Kline and colleagues (2013) found that students who chose rural or regional practica were motivated by one or more of the following factors: (1) they had previously lived in a rural community, (2) they were considering working in a rural community and wanted to test it out through practicum, and (3) they were keen for new adventures. In their analysis of students' survey results,

these authors concluded that the “interconnection between schools and communities and the value of community-based relationships were key themes” (Kline et al., 2013, p. 5). The authors found that support for students, through a sense of connectedness with their placement communities was “critical” (p. 8). Students greatly appreciated “direct support” from their universities through site visits and contact with their practicum peers, and they stated that this support was particularly important when the practicum was challenging. As Kline and colleagues (2013) stated, “unless compensated for by a very welcoming placement community and supportive mentor teacher, isolation from the support offered by university staff and peers appeared to be one of the key barriers to a successful practicum” (p. 8).

Jones (2011) found that even very short-term rural practica positively shape students’ views of rural communities. The author reported on the experiences of graduate-level education students who travelled to rural Alaska, where approximately 94 percent of the population is “Alaska Native” (Jones’s term for Indigenous Alaskans), for four to five days. Students prepared for the rural practicum experience through prior coursework that focused on “advanced multicultural education, an Alaska studies course, and a course on inclusion as well as participating in an overall course of study that is infused with explicit teachings and experiences related to diversity” (Jones, 2011, p. 14). In her analysis of pre- and post-practicum data from 52 practicum students representing four cohorts, Jones noted important shifts in students’ attitudes towards rural Alaska communities. The author’s analysis of pre-practicum questionnaires revealed three attitudes that students commonly held about rural communities: (1) “rural Alaska Native communities are unwelcoming”; (2) “rural Alaska schools are inferior”; and (3) “rural

Alaska Native communities are dysfunctional” (Jones, 2011, p. 11). Jones’s (2011) analysis of post-practicum questionnaires, interviews, and journals revealed a shift in two of these attitudes, with the majority of students no longer expressing beliefs that rural Alaska was unwelcoming nor that rural Alaskan schools were inferior. Importantly, the preservice teachers seemed to gain greater sensitivity and understanding of the experiences of rural students who transition to urban schools. Jones (2011) surmised that the preservice teachers were able to draw on their own experience of “disequilibrium” (p. 17) during their practica through their experience of being visitors to the rural community. Jones (2011) theorized that this disequilibrium helped students develop greater empathy toward the rural students’ experiences. Jones (2011) concludes:

These changes in how teacher educators purpose the rural practicum may be a small step toward achieving some equity for minority students, urban or rural, if the practicum moves beyond a job recruitment tool and is used as a means to develop ideas about social justice. (p. 17)

It is important to note that Jones (2011) did not find an increase in the number of students who wished to pursue teaching in rural Alaska, as previously stated is often an intended outcome of rural practica. Additionally, and disappointingly, Jones (2011) found that the pre-practicum theme that “rural Alaska Native communities are dysfunctional” (p. 11) continued to emerge in students’ post-practicum responses. Jones (2011) draws on the work of Haberman and Post (1992) to surmise that students tend to “selectively perceive and reinforce their initial preconceptions” (p. 29), thus potentially reinforcing stereotypes. However, Jones (2011) believes that using the students’ experience of disequilibrium in the practicum and combining this with “outward directed cultural

consciousness teaching programs” (p. 17) could help students to confront their attitudes, creating a more socially just program.

To build on the strengths of rural practicum and mediate the challenges, researchers have identified several strategies. Ralph and Walker (2012) recommend that universities (1) prepare students for the rural practicum by offering students orientation through a credit course which could include past practicum students as guest speakers; (2) provide students with stipends or reduced tuition fees for the rural practicum course; (3) provide students with contact lists for practicum accommodations; (4) provide mentoring workshops to aspiring practicum supervisors in rural areas; and (5) use technology to enhance the students’ support systems while they are on practicum. Kline and colleagues (2013) concluded that students need a “triangulation of support from colleagues, mentor teachers, and university personnel” (p. 9). These authors advocate for “a multi-tiered approach combining school, community, and university structures to support successful professional experience in rural and regional contexts” (p. 10). They found it was key for students to have access to university resources. Students stressed the importance of joining in to their placement communities as the means to develop “place consciousnesses” (Kline et al., 2013, p. 10). Students also spoke of the importance of peer support as a means of mediating their sense of isolation, particularly when students were experiencing challenging practica. Kline et al. (2013) concluded that “partnerships between teacher educators and community stakeholders have the potential to sustain pre-service teachers on rural and regional professional experience” (p. 11).

Implications for SCYC from the literature on rural practicum.

In SCYC's quest to place social justice more centrally in curriculum, I believe the rural practicum can play a pivotal role by broadening students' experiences. In particular, Jones (2011) outlines a promising model for SCYC that provides a more feasible alternative for students than a full-term practicum and involves experiencing life and CYC practice in a rural community. Regardless of whether students choose to subsequently return to rural communities to work or not, there are benefits to the students, and hopefully to the communities themselves. By being visitors to rural communities, CYC students might begin to understand what it means to live in a rural community and gain valuable insights about their own attitudes and assumptions. Jones's (2011) study offers an interesting exemplar for the SCYC program by highlighting the possibility of students benefitting through very brief practicum experiences in rural communities. Not every student wishes to, or has the financial means to, undertake a full practicum in a rural community; however, a week-long practicum might be within more students' means. There are inherent risks, however, potentially amplified by the brevity of a short-term practicum, that students will act as "tourists," thus "othering" community members. Faculty and students would need to prepare for a rural practicum by carefully considering their motivations, intentions, their own social locations, and the ethics they wish to embed within their praxis. Burant and Kirby (2002) also stress the importance of students on rural practica critically reflecting on their experiences throughout their time away.

Ultimately, longer rural practica are more likely to generate more transformative learning experiences for students. With more time, students could form deeper

connections to the children, youth, families, community members, and their practicum mentors and develop a deeper understanding of place consciousness (Kline et al., 2013). If possible during longer-term rural practica, I would recommend pairing or grouping students geographically so that they can form a community of learning to reflect together on their experiences and to ease the isolation and loneliness. When this is not possible, providing that students have access to the Internet, technology can be used to allow students in similar practicum sites (possibly not in the same geographic area, but in rural communities) to connect with one another, and with their instructor and practicum coordinator, to gain valuable support. As Kline et al. (2013) point out, both peer and program support are highly valued by students on remote practica. While it may not be practical or financially viable for practicum instructors to do site visits to every student at a rural placement site, it would be important for practicum instructors to build partnerships with potential practicum supervisors in rural community sites. Together, faculty, community members, and students need to reflect about what communities, students', and SCYC might take away and give up through the rural practicum experience.

Literature Review Summary

UVic SCYC has long been a leader in the CYC field and the time has come to take another step forward in reimagining practicum. My wish is for SCYC to create an embodied practicum that holds CYC administrators, instructors, practicum coordinators, site supervisors, and students accountable as advocates for social justice. In the 21st century, we must pull from the shadows the pervasive injustices affecting children, youth, and families, such as the ongoing legacies of colonization, racism, gender violence,

heteronormativity, paternalism, etc. We must be aware that power and privilege are unevenly distributed within our communities. We must reimagine practicum with inclusive and culturally relevant practices for all students and communities. Perhaps we can take up Eve Tuck's (2009) call for desire-based frameworks and view communities not as flattened spaces but as infinitely complex spaces full of hope, liveliness, and resistance. Practicum students, working together with university faculty, can be agents of change in creating a new model of practicum that helps to move communities forward in new ways by engaging SCYC more meaningfully in community-led solutions.

Community engagement could enliven not only practica but CYC practice as well. A starting place might be to build on the HPPAE exemplar by forming a practicum consortium that includes community members from a range of CYC practicum sites.

In the chapter that follows I provide a practicum working document that builds on the reviewed literature and offers suggestions for SCYC practicum.

Chapter 3: The SCYC Practicum Working Document

In this chapter I pick up threads from salient points in the reviewed literature, weaving these together with the goals, objectives, and collective ethics of the SCYC Practicum Council, the goals of this project, and my own musings to reimagine SCYC practicum in the 21st century. How do we move forward to create a CYC practicum that is “dynamic, provocative, and responsive” (SCYC Practicum Council, personal communication, March 13, 2015)? How do we politicize practicum so that it boldly redresses issues of marginalization, power, and privilege and holds us accountable to our complicity in these conditions? How do we create a practicum that is hopeful and centres around the potentialities of practicum students, as well as children, youth, families, and communities? Returning to my overarching project questions:

- What would CYC practicum, at its most lively and generative, include?
- How might the SCYC undergraduate practicum be reimaged to address areas of tension and open up new possibilities for both student learning and the SCYC engagement with community?
- In reimaging SCYC practicum, how can we draw on the reviewed literature and, in particular, the seven exemplars previously outlined, to reimagine 21st-century CYC practicum?

In this chapter I respond to these questions by offering suggestions for the change process and the ways in which communities of practice can be further embedded into the SCYC program, before moving on to provide specific suggestions for the roles of SCYC administration, practicum coordinators, practicum instructors, practicum students, and

practicum site mentors. I begin by outlining important limitations of this project to make transparent what this project is and is not.

Limitations of This Project

While this project includes a substantial review of peer-reviewed and scholarly literature, it excludes a review of existing UVic SCYC practicum structure, learning outcomes or curricula, or faculty, practicum site, or student experiences or demographics. Although this project does include some anecdotal views expressed by SCYC Practicum Council members, it does not include a formal and thorough assessment of the current views of students, practicum supervisors, faculty, SCYC administration, or community members. All of these sources are tremendously important for informing the decisions ahead for the SCYC. However, reviewing stakeholders' views falls outside of the scope of this present project. Instead, this project pays particular attention to communities of practice literature as well as seven innovative practicum exemplars. I believe these sources provide openings for reimagining CYC practicum, CYC praxis, and community engagement, and for attending more meaningfully to a socially just CYC perspective. It cannot be assumed that the suggestions I provide in this working document represent completely new ideas for UVic's SCYC program. My hope is that this project will contribute to the conversations already taking place within the UVic SCYC around reconceptualizing practicum.

An important limitation I have faced throughout the project writing process is the constraint of semantics. As I wrote in Chapter 2, Tuck and Yang (2012) make sobering and provocative points about the contested nature of the term *decolonizing*. These authors' points were echoed during the SCYC Practicum Council meeting discussions

(SCYC Practicum Council, personal communication, March 13, 2015). Yet, I have struggled to find a term other than decolonization that adequately captures the intentions of the Council in wishing to move toward creating a more culturally safe and politicized, practicum—a practicum that is more inclusive of Indigenous students and communities. Drawing from Derrida (1976), my own thoughts are that the best we can do is to place the term “decolonization” under *erasure* for now. Mindful of my location as a settler, I recognize that the choice of language for the ways to help us move forward through practicum is not my decision to make and ought to emerge through consulting with Indigenous communities themselves.

This project does not include a study of the feasibility of the suggestions I offer, and I recognize that UVic SCYC may or may not have the resources needed to implement the suggested changes. Examining these logistics falls outside of the scope of this project. However, I believe that creative reimagining needs to begin from a place of unfettered visioning, which follows.

Suggestions for Reimagining 21st-Century CYC Practicum

The practicum change process.

Change, even when welcomed and needed, always involves making way for something new by giving something up. The process tends to evoke a sense of loss and fear initially for stakeholders while a new vision and roadmap is created. In this section I offer suggestions for a collaborative change process. In this project I offer bold suggestions for reimagining practicum. However, I also recognize that changes, in order to be palatable to others and meet logistical challenges, must be broken down into smaller steps and objectives.

- **Understand Change as a Grief Process**—For stakeholders, change involves both endings and beginnings. As a grief process it often triggers for stakeholders loss and fear that must be acknowledged and processed before the group can move forward toward a new vision (Bridges, 2009). Organizational change author Bridges (2009) suggests asking everyone involved to think seriously about, “*Who is going to have to let go of what to make the change work as planned*” (p. 192, italics in original).
- **Create a 21st-Century SCYC Ethos**—The CYC field itself is shifting and CYC is comprised of rich plurality. Faculty, practicum coordinators, practicum supervisors, practicum site staff, and CYC students work within a variety of specialty streams and come from a spectrum of social locations, previous experiences, and epistemological and ontological starting places. To move forward in rethinking practicum, I suggest the first step is collaborating to create a SCYC “ethos for our time” (J. White, 2015, p. 499).
- **Conduct a Review of Existing UVic SCYC Program**—Review and critique the current curriculum and student learning outcomes in the context of the 21st-century SCYC ethos. I suggest attention be given to understanding how current curricula and outcomes, including practica, align with the UVic SCYC ethos and nest within the program as whole. Questions to be asked include the following:
How do the current courses and outcomes across courses relate to one another?
How is practica currently structured? Where are the demographics of current practica settings?

- **Consult With UVic Practicum Stakeholders**—While input within the SCYC Practicum Council has come from a diversity of stakeholders, a more rigorous consultation process with the broader group of stakeholders would provide stronger leverage for the more global or radical changes I have envisioned in this project. How do current UVic CYC students, recent graduates of the program, practicum coordinators, practicum site supervisors, faculty and instructors, and communities view the current practicum structure, and what changes, if any, do they wish for? A qualitative approach, using surveys with open-ended questions, as well as focus groups and in-depth interviews with key informants, would provide a balance of broad input as well as richer, deeper data focused on particular questions.
- **Consult with Other Community Leaders**—Who are the potential stakeholders who have not already been included in the consultation process? Who are the communities and agencies that SCYC are trying to reach? For example, have local Elders, Friendship Centre staff, First Nations and Métis community members been consulted? UVic's HSD Indigenous Student Support Centre and the Office of Indigenous Affairs staff may be able to assist with this process because they are already connected to local Indigenous communities.
- **Implement Pilot Projects as a Starting Place**—Change always requires a number of resources, such as time, financial resources, support from multiple stakeholders, etc. Some of these resources may not be yet be available to SCYC. Practicum pilot projects would allow SCYC to make cautious steps forward, requiring fewer resources than program-wide changes, and allowing time for

assessing outcomes and working through challenges. Successful pilot projects would provide impetus and motivation for the group's change process and long-term goals (Bridges, 2009).

Relations with communities and landscapes of practice.

In the following section I suggest ways in which communities of practice (Wenger, 1998, 2011) and landscapes of practice (Wenger-Trayner et al., 2015) concepts could be more greatly embedded into the CYC program. The practice-based courses I suggest in this chapter (practica advisors/tutors program, community-based hub model, situated learning course, service-learning course and short-term rural practica) offer a spectrum of possible positive outcomes, including bringing students together in “communities of learning” and bringing SCYC together with community partners in landscapes of practice.

- Consider how to develop or strengthen and integrate “communities of learning” into all courses, including practicum, to allow students to critically reflect with faculty, based on students' shared, localized, and lived experiences (Wenger, 1998).
- Implement a cohort model for Indigenous students to allow students to build strong communities of learning by spending time together over multiple courses (Van der Wey, 2007; Wimmer et al., 2010).
- Build connections between Indigenous students and SCYC faculty and staff as soon as possible after students' admission to the SCYC program, for example, through online discussion boards and through SCYC faculty and staff reaching

- out to students through email, phone calls, Skype calls, etc. (Wimmer et al., 2010).
- Develop a landscape of practice by creating a SCYC practica consortium (Funderburk et al., 2006; Lawrance et al., 2007; Mertz et al., 2007) composed of Elders, SCYC administration, faculty, community agency members representing each specialty stream, UVic Indigenous Affairs staff and/or faculty, and undergraduate- and graduate-level CYC students. Careful thought should be given to who should be included to capture the plurality of CYC. In the hopes of creating a cohesive and productive group, members should be encouraged to make a minimum two-year commitment to the consortium. Once the initial work is done in creating the ethos and collective ethics and refining the terms of reference, the consortium members may find it more productive and time efficient to create committees to undertake some of the tasks.
 - Develop a situated-learning course that builds on a hybrid of George, Silver, and Preston's (2013) community hub model and Edmonds-Cady and Sosulski's (2012) situated-learning model, embedding hands-on learning into coursework that extends beyond practicum. The course would bring together faculty, practicum coordinators, students, agency staff, and community members in a landscape of learning. Working together, community members, faculty, and students would identify a grassroots community issue(s), critically reflect on the issue(s) through a postfoundational lens, and then work toward implementing change. Such a course would not only have applicability for students and faculty across specialty streams, I believe it would also serve to unite students by

transforming the SCYC into a vibrant community hub. I anticipate that there might be secondary positive outcomes to the course, such as new practicum placements for students or new community-engaged research sites, as a result of new relationships between the SCYC and community partners.

- Develop a service-learning course that meets an identified community need (Macy & Squires, 2009; Macy et al., 2009). Have graduate students assist in the development of the course by assessing community needs and organizing logistics. Practicum advisors would support the course implementation by providing supervision and feedback to students.
- Develop rural practica courses that are structured to include means for students to connect with one another while on practicum through discussion boards, Skype calls, or grouping students together at the same practicum site (Kline et al., 2013).
- Develop roles for practicum advisors, potentially CYC graduate students, to work weekly on site in practicum with students and agency staff (Clapton et al., 2006, 2008; Clapton & Forbes, 2009; Munro, 2005).

Role of SCYC director and the undergraduate program committee.

The role of SCYC leadership in creating practicum change is key. It involves leading others toward a new vision for practicum within the greater context of the SCYC mission and goals, advocating for SCYC needs with UVic administration, leading faculty and staff in working collaboratively towards practicum change, and motivating and supporting stakeholders through the change process. In this section I offer specific suggestions for the SCYC leadership in creating a contextualized SCYC practicum for the 21st century.

- Involve Elders in all stages of the practicum program development and actualization.
- Ensure an iterative process is kept in place with ongoing cycles of consultation with stakeholders, program adjustments, assessment, etc.
- Provide support and time for SCYC faculty and staff to build strong relationships with Indigenous students to provide them with holistic support and advice, when needed, including support through personal challenges.
- Support the creation of practicum pilot projects, such as a community hub model, practicum advisors program, a service-learning program, a situated-learning course and a short-term rural practicum course. Initially, pilot new programs in the Greater Victoria area, then assess outcomes and challenges to decide whether to expand to additional communities for off-campus students.
- Advocate an increase to the number of teaching and staff positions (e.g., faculty and sessional teaching staff, practicum advisors, service-learning project coordinators, Indigenous practica coordinator, etc.) to add additional supports for practicum students and to develop new experiential courses described above.

Role of SCYC practica instructors.

Practicum instructors are in the unique role of developing curriculum and working with both students and practicum site staff. In this project I have offered suggestions for practica that call on instructors to have greater engagement with communities through situated learning courses. I also suggest that decolonizing work must involve greater engagement with Indigenous communities, with Indigenous faculty taking the lead, or Indigenous community leaders co-leading courses with SCYC instructors. Instructors

offer tremendous support to students, particularly when practica conditions are challenging. Building on communities of practice concepts, instructors can play key roles in creating productive communities of learning within practica.

- Practicum instructors, in collaboration with practicum advisors (see description for this position below) to coordinate regular group sessions/practicum seminars for practicum students, grouped together by agency type or CYC specialty stream, to encourage communities of learning. If possible, the sessions should be held at a central practicum site, with the session location rotating to allow students to visit a range of different practicum sites.
- Indigenous faculty and staff to take lead roles in developing and implementing an Indigenous practicum program. While recognizing the valuable role that non-Indigenous faculty fulfill as allies for Indigenous students and communities, we must also recognize that we come from differing social locations.
- Invite Indigenous SCYC graduates and other Indigenous CYC practitioners to be guest speakers for on-campus courses.
- Develop a credit course on CYC practice in rural/remote communities, centring on place consciousness and including a one-week visit to a rural community. SCYC would need to develop partnerships with communities who would be willing to host the CYC visitors. In the on-campus portions of the course leading up to the rural experience, classes would include guest presentations from those who have lived or practiced in rural communities. Pre- and post-rural visit coursework should encourage students to critically reflect on their own biases and assumptions.

- Faculty to work in tandem with practica coordinators to connect with their pre-existing contacts with community agencies to assess interest in developing partnerships with SCYC for potential pilot projects that might include a rural practicum course, a community hub, a situated-learning course, a service-learning program, or a SCYC practicum consortium.

Role of graduate students.

Graduate students come to SCYC with prior experiences in the field, from a range of settings. While graduate students often work as teaching assistants, in the sections below I suggest expanding the role of graduate students to include working as practica site advisors and project coordinators for service-learning or community hub courses. These expanded roles would have the dual benefit of greatly enriching the learning experiences for graduate students.

Practicum advisors.

- Contract graduate students or experienced graduates from the CYC program to act as on-site practicum advisors. Advisors would spend at least half a day per week at each practicum site, learning more about the practice of the agency, supervising students, and providing professional development to practicum staff, if staff are interested.
- Practicum advisors to work with practicum site staff and students at each site to define the protocol for how the advisor will work with practicum students. This protocol would emerge based on the needs of the practicum site for having support and supervision for practicum students.

- In addition to the supervision and feedback that students receive from their practicum supervisors, advisors would also provide feedback to students. It is expected that advisors would spend time working alongside students in the practice site in order to provide concrete and timely feedback.
- Practicum advisors to coordinate professional development events for practica site staff based on jointly decided topics and curriculum.

Project coordinators.

- Contract graduate students to work as project coordinators to begin the groundwork for developing a service-learning course, such as a recreationally based summer camp program for school-aged children. Project coordinators would first assess community needs and interest for the project, then would coordinate logistics of locating space, equipment, and materials, developing a budget, accessing support on campus through the UVic Child Care Committee, etc.
- Contract graduate students to work in project coordinator roles for a SCYC community hub model course. Graduate students to work in leadership roles overseeing and supporting undergraduate students in the following: researching community needs and resources, convening meetings with members of the community, developing proposals, researching funding opportunities, etc.

Role of SCYC practica coordinators.

Practica coordinators are in the unique position at the hub of practica, working to help students find a practicum site to meet their learning goals, building relationships with and coordinating the needs of practicum site supervisors, and working closely with

practica instructors and SCYC administration. In the section that follows I suggest an expanded role for practica coordinators as well as an increase in SCYC practica coordinator positions to meet the demands of the newly expanded roles.

- Greatly expand the roles of practica coordinators to allow increased time for relationship building with community agency members. This would allow practica coordinators to help locate community partners to work together with SCYC in developing, as examples, a community hub model for practica (George et al., 2013) or a situated-learning course (Edmonds-Cady & Sosulski, 2012). If practica coordinators can maintain connections with UVic SCYC graduates, this rich network of potential community partners is potentially in place. In particular, graduates of the program who now work in rural or remote communities could be a great resource for providing practica settings. In order to expand practica coordinator roles, new positions would likely need to be added.
- Consult with practicum supervisors/potential practicum supervisors to learn (1) what barriers/potential barriers prevent agency staff from taking on the supervision of practicum students and how these barriers might be reduced; (2) what incentives the SCYC might offer to mitigate these barriers (e.g., library privileges, invitations to professional development seminars/workshops/occasional classes at UVic/recognition banquets).
- Create a position for an Indigenous practica program coordinator. The role of this coordinator would be twofold: (1) to build and nurture relationships between the SCYC and members of Indigenous communities in order to engage more meaningfully in meeting the needs of both SCYC Indigenous practica students

- and the Indigenous communities who provide practica placements to students; and
- (2) to provide additional support to Indigenous students during practica. The Indigenous practica program coordinator would work closely with UVic's Indigenous Affairs Office, Elders, and SCYC faculty members in a collaborative effort to centre Indigenous practica around Indigenous culture and knowledges.
- Encourage Indigenous students, through the Indigenous practica program coordinator, to celebrate their culture and traditions and connect with other students through SCYC-organized events, as well as through the HSD Indigenous Student Support Centre and UVic Indigenous Affairs events. The coordinator could serve as a bridge between SCYC Indigenous students and the HSD Indigenous Student Support Centre and UVic First Peoples' House for interested students.

Role of practicum students.

A reimagined practicum offers new possibilities for students that I will outline in the following section. These new practicum (and other coursework) opportunities are intended to engage SCYC students more meaningfully in communities to help contextualize both practica as well as CYC students' views of children, youth, families, and communities.

- Students to have opportunities through coursework such as community hub / situated learning to meet with grassroots community members to learn more about the issues affecting their lives as well as their strengths, resiliencies, and solutions. Community issues identified would be further explored through class readings, class presentations by guest speakers, etc. Students would apply

postfoundational critical theories in assessing needs and creative solutions.

Students, community members, and faculty to collaboratively develop action plans that might include forms of activism, exhibitions, grant-writing efforts, etc.

- Students to be provided with opportunities to work in a service-learning course that provides hands-on experience to students while also providing a service to children, youth, families, and/or communities. Students would be guided and evaluated by their course instructor on planning and implementing, for example, a short-term summer camp program for children from low-income families.
- Students, particularly those with interests in working in rural/remote communities, to participate in a CYC short-term rural practicum course.
- Students to consider ways in which they can leave positive traces of their time in practicum behind (e.g., contributing a special project, assisting with the agency's fundraising efforts, sharing readings with agency staff, etc.).

Role of practicum site mentors.

As outlined in Chapter 2, practica site mentors play a key role in the learning experiences of students. Practica site mentors also possess insights and knowledge about the lived experiences of their community members. In reimagining CYC practica, I have called for greater engagement with communities. A great starting place for engagement is to consult with the practicum site mentors with whom SCYC practica coordinators and instructors have established relationships.

- Recruit practicum site mentors who have established relationships with SCYC for SCYC practicum pilot projects, such as working with on-site practicum advisors,

short-term rural practica programs, or community members for community hub or situated learning courses.

- Recruit practicum mentors who are established as leaders in their communities and within their particular CYC streams to become members of the SCYC practica consortium.
- Invite mentors to provide feedback regarding practicum to SCYC through stakeholder consultation process.
- Recruit practicum mentors to provide occasional guest presentations to CYC classes.
- The Indigenous practica program coordinator to work closely with local Indigenous communities to identify mentors who could be willing to provide support and role modelling to Indigenous students.

Table 1: UVic SCYC Practicum Working Document: Overview of Suggested Roles

Position(s)	Suggested Roles
Director and UPC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the creation of a SCYC ethos for the 21st century. • Review CYC course curricula and learning outcomes for (1) alignment with SCYC ethos, and (2) coherence across courses and within the program as a whole. • Consult with practica stakeholders, e.g. students, recent graduates, practicum supervisors, practica coordinators, instructors, and community members to assess current needs of practicum students, gaps in program, strengths, etc. • Convene a practica consortium, ensuring representation from all stakeholder groups. • Ensure Indigenous faculty, students, INAF, HSD Indigenous Student Support Centre staff, Elders, and/or Indigenous community members are included as key stakeholders in all initiatives listed above. • Advocate to increase number of Indigenous faculty and staff (e.g., a new position for an Indigenous practica coordinator). • Advocate for new practice-based courses to be created (see instructors section).
Practica Instructors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create new practice-based courses, e.g., (1) practicum advisors program (Clapton et al., 2008); (2) a community-based hub model (George et al., 2013); (3) a situated-learning course (Edmonds-Cady & Sosulski, 2012); (4) a service-learning course (Macy & Squires, 2009); and (5) a short-term rural practicum course (Jones, 2011). • Facilitate on-campus practicum seminars with students grouped by specialty stream or setting type • Invite Indigenous SCYC graduates and practitioners as guest speakers or co-leaders of on-campus courses. • Support development of new community engagement projects, such as community-based hub and situated learning courses and practica consortia, by reaching out to community contacts. • Foster students' communities of learning in all courses.

- CYC Graduate Students
- If practicum advisors program is implemented, graduate students to work on site with students and practitioners as practicum advisors/tutors.
 - If community-based hub model is implemented, graduate students to coordinate and assist with overseeing undergraduate student initiatives.
 - If service-learning course is implemented, graduate students to assist with program coordination.
- Practica Coordinators
- Positions to be expanded to allow additional time to build and maintain relationships with former CYC graduates, practicum site mentors, and other community members who might serve as community partners for practica consortium or new practice-based courses.
 - Consult with UPC to share experiences and insights regarding CYC practica.
 - Consult with current/potential practicum supervisors to determine possible barriers and incentives for accepting practicum students.
 - Consult with UPC and practicum instructors in development of new practice-based courses.
 - New Indigenous practicum coordinator position to be added.
- Practica Students
- Consult with UPC and practica consortium as important stakeholders in assessing current CYC practica to help in the creation of a 21st century CYC ethos;
 - Selected students to be invited as members of practica consortia;
 - Participate in new practice-based courses (see practica instructors section);
 - Students to consider ways in which they can leave positive traces behind at their practicum sites at completion of their course.
- Site Mentors
- Selected site mentors to participate in SCYC practice-based pilot projects, e.g., practicum advisors/tutors project, community-based hub model, situated-learning course, service-learning course, etc.
 - Selected site mentors, representing a range of CYC practice site and specialty streams, to participate as members of the SCYC practica consortia.
 - Provide feedback to SCYC regarding practica

- through stakeholder consultation process.
- Selected site mentors, in particular those working in Indigenous practice sites, to be guest speakers and/or co-instructors of CYC courses.

Concluding Thoughts

Practicum is the site of intersection for students, faculty, practicum coordinators, agency staff, children, youth, families, and communities, as well as the point of intersection for multiple social locations, identities, worldviews, and practice theories (Clark & Drolet, 2014). Practicum is also the meeting ground for the academy and the community, providing a natural site for revolutionizing the CYC field. Through practicum, we have the opportunity to think critically together with community members about how we might move forward with a practicum that is responsive to politics such as neoliberalism and colonial inheritances and promotes engaged and transformative learning for students, faculty, and community members alike. UVic SCYC has long been a leader in the CYC field, and the time has come to take another step forward in creating a SCYC ethos for the 21st century that considers how we wish to construct children, families, communities, and ourselves as CYC professionals. What I hope will emerge from our ethos is a reimagined practicum that is politicized and embodied. To move forward we must reposition not only our views of practicum but ourselves in practicum and practice—as students, faculty and staff, practitioners, and mentors.

Appendix

Practicum Council Terms of Reference—Selected Sections

Formation Details

This council responds to the challenges of creating and updating practicum courses to effectively align with the needs of the field and the curriculum.

Goals

1. To ensure the ongoing value, relevance, and effectiveness of practicum courses within the School of Child and Youth Care.
2. To develop a plan for ongoing practicum course development that reflects recommendations from the published scholarly literature and the input of diverse stakeholders.
3. To align practicum outcomes with the CYC field and SCYC curriculum.
4. To identify priorities for practicum course revisions.

Deliverables

The work of the council will include:

- Critical review and evaluation of practicum curriculum/design/delivery
- Review/approval of practicum course development blueprints (in consultation with UPC-curriculum and pedagogy council)
- Ensure that required competencies are integrated within practicum courses for:
 - British Columbia Child and Youth Care Education Consortium (BCCYCEC)
 - National outcomes
 - Others as necessary
- Ensure that specialization competencies are represented in practicum curriculum/design/delivery (e.g., early years, child protection/welfare outcomes etc.)

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