



Transforming the Field
Education Landscape

STATE OF SOCIAL WORK FIELD EDUCATION: An International Comparison Between Canada and the United States

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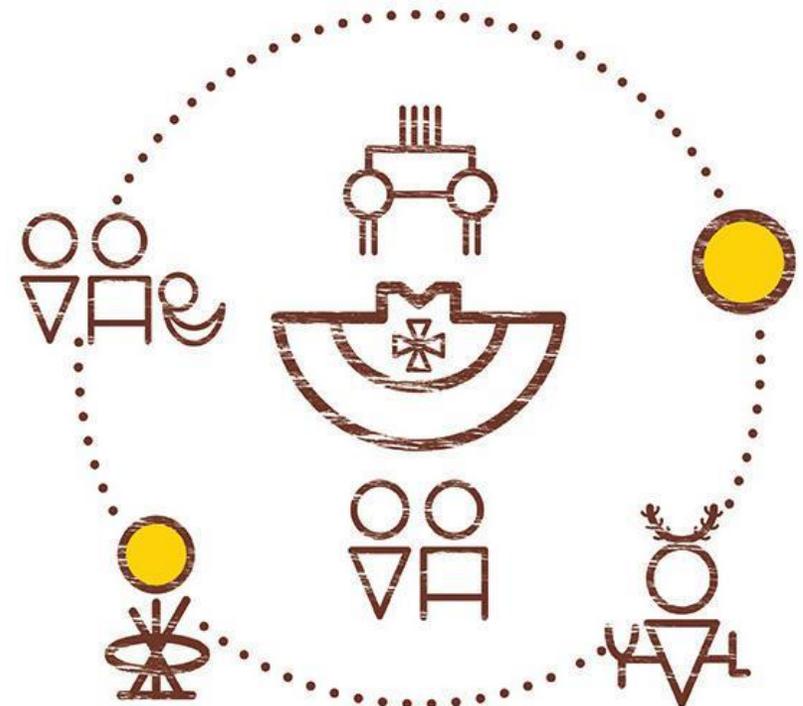
Host: Dr. Vibha Kaushik

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TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The University of Calgary respectfully acknowledges the traditional territories of the people of Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprising the Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai First Nations), as well as the Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda (including the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations). The City of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region III.

L'Université de Calgary reconnaît respectueusement qu'elle est située sur les terres du Traité 6, lieu de rassemblement traditionnel pour de nombreux peuples autochtones dont les Cris, les Pieds-Noirs, les Métis, les Sioux des Nakotas, les Iroquois, les Dénés, les Ojibwés/Saulteaux/Anichinabés, les Inuits et bien d'autres encore, dont les histoires, les langues et les cultures continuent d'influencer notre communauté si vivante.



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University of Calgary Office of Indigenous Engagement

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

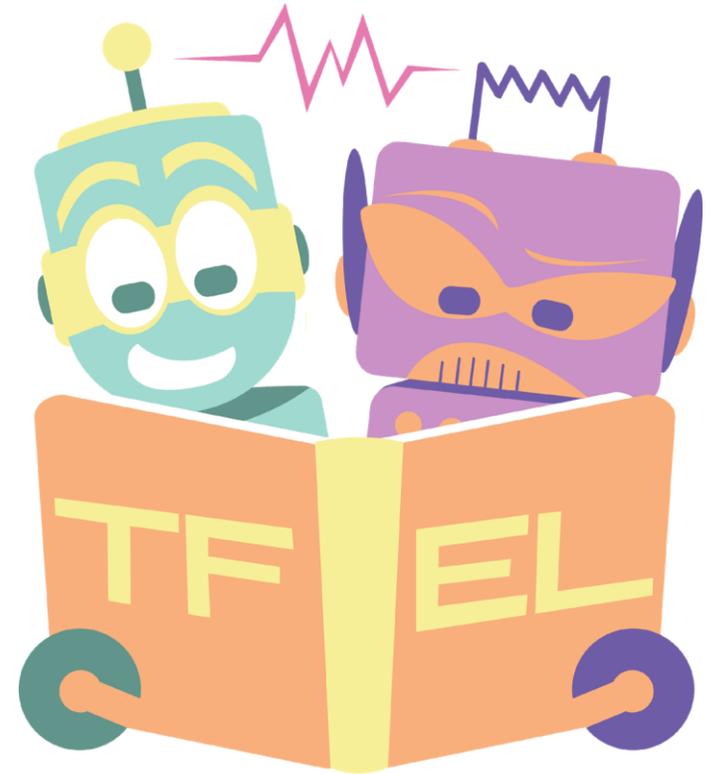
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CRSH  SSHRC

OVERVIEW

- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Purpose
- Methodology
- Findings & Comparative Analysis
- Discussion
- Limitations
- Recommendations & Direction For Future Research
- Questions



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INTRODUCTION

- Dr. Julie Drolet PhD, RSW
 - Professor, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary
 - Project Director, TFEL partnership
- Dr. Marion Bogo O.C., LL.D, MSW, RSW
 - Professor, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto
 - Honorary Research Fellow, Laurea University of Applied Sciences
- We wish to acknowledge the contributions of: Elisa (BSW), Ellen(BSW), Jayden (BSW), Jeff (PhD Student), Mohammad (MSW), Ory (MSW), Tara (PhD Candidate) in the State of SSWFE Research Group.



LITERATURE REVIEW



FIELD EDUCATION IN A CANADIAN CONTEXT

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- There are approximately 50,000 social workers in Canada whom may have undergone field placements (Drolet & Harriman, 2020).
 - Field education in Canada is in a state of crisis (Ayala et al., 2018).
 - Ayala and colleagues (2018) determined that field education is facing four key challenges:
 1. Social work context and realities;
 2. Practice shortages and saturation;
 3. Practicum procurement and field instructor recruitment and retention;
 4. Expectations and workloads of field education coordinators.

FIELD EDUCATION IN AN AMERICAN CONTEXT

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- In the 2016, CSWE found there were 18,128 bachelor of social work students in field education and 250 accredited master of social work programs.
 - Undergraduate level student enrollment increased by 6% between 2011-2016 (CSWE, 2016).
 - Graduate student increased by 20% between 2011-2016 (CSWE, 2016).
 - Research suggests that a 20% increase for field placements (Gushwa & Harriman, 2019)

FIELD EDUCATION IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Field instructors are balancing many responsibilities (Hay, 2018; Nguyen et al., 2020).

- This challenge is associated with finding suitable placements notwithstanding higher enrolment of students (Hay, 2018).
- There are nonprofessional placements that include office work or custodial work instead of social work tasks (Nguyen et al., 2020).
- Social worker students are often being placed with non-social work supervisors (Cleak & Zuchowski, 2020).

PURPOSE

Purpose: To compare, examine, and gain a better understanding of social work field education in Canada and the United States.

Field education areas examined:

- Field education coordinators & directors (FECD) employment based on program size
- Faculty assigned to field functions
- Perceptions of FECDs on the state of field education

METHODOLOGY

American Survey

- Conducted by the CSWE in Spring 2015
- Administered electronically to institutions (CSWE, 2015)
- Survey contained Likert-scale questions pertaining to staffing and administrative models, resource allocation, and the duties of FECDs
- One response per institution
- Of the 562 institutions invited to participate in the survey, 312 institutions participated- response rate of 57.8%.
- Analysis incorporated the Carnegie classification system
 - Distinguishes between public and private university institutions in America.
- The American data for this analysis is based on publicly accessible data from reports published by the CSWE

METHODOLOGY

Canadian Survey

- Conducted by TFEL & administered in Spring 2020
- Adapted with permission from the CSWE's survey conducted in 2015
- 39 of 43 CASWE accredited social work programs in Canada participated in the survey- 90.6% response rate
- Administered through online survey & one response per institution
- Survey contained Likert-scale questions pertaining to staffing and administrative models, resource allocation, and the duties of FECDs
- Offered in English & French



FINDINGS & COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS



FIELD EDUCATION COORDINATOR/DIRECTOR EMPLOYMENT

FECD Employment Status

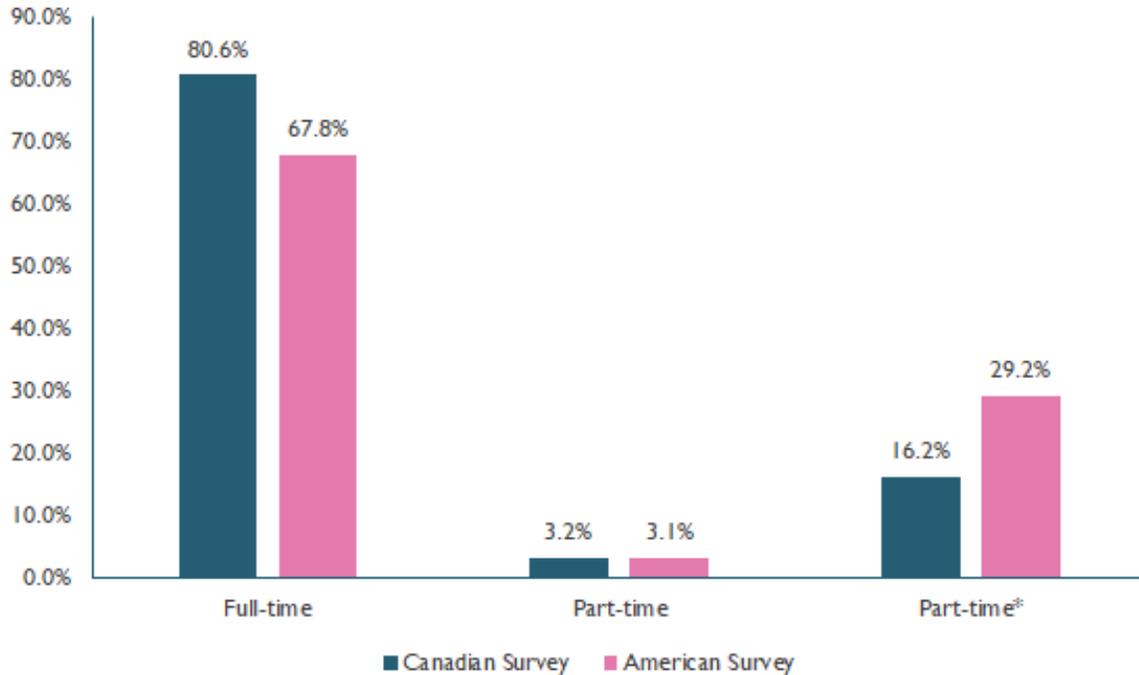


Figure 1. Comparison of employment status based within Social Work Programs in Canada and the US. (Note * refers to part-time within a full-time appointment with other duties)

Number of Staff Assigned to Field Functions

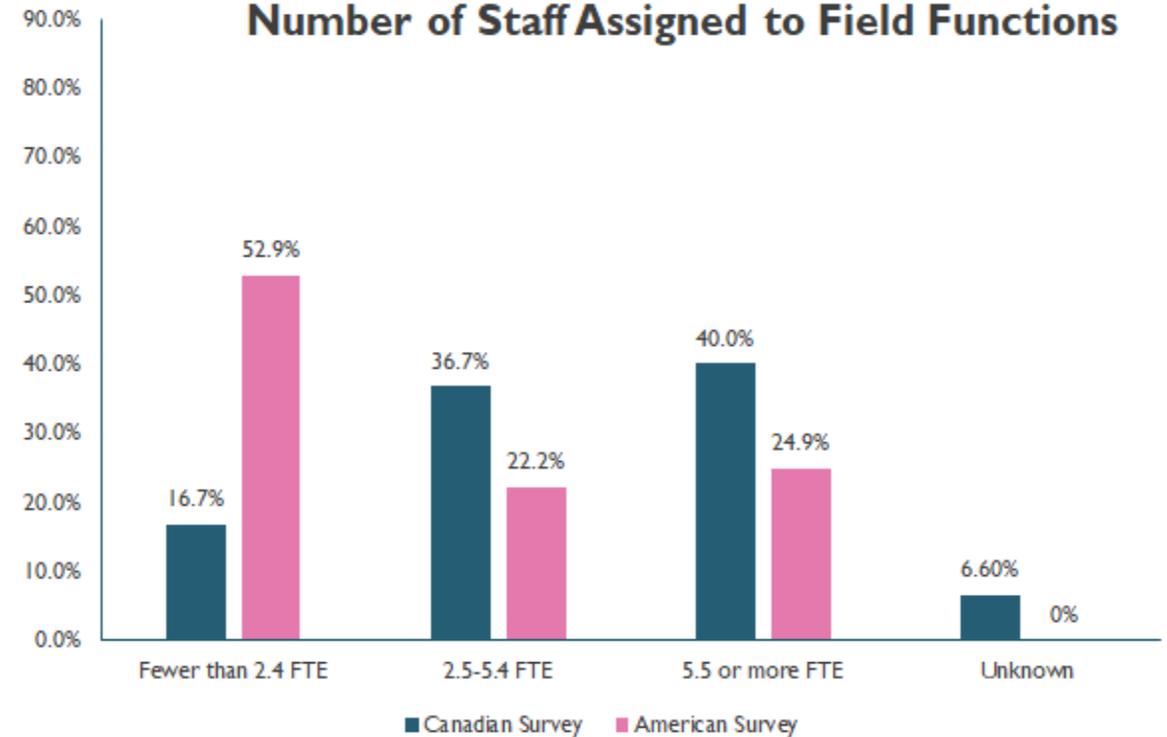


Figure 2. Comparison of FECD position based within Social Work Programs in Canada and the US. (Note * refers to an academic rank of assistant professor, associate professor, professor, or instructor)

STAFF ASSIGNED TO FIELD EDUCATION FUNCTIONS

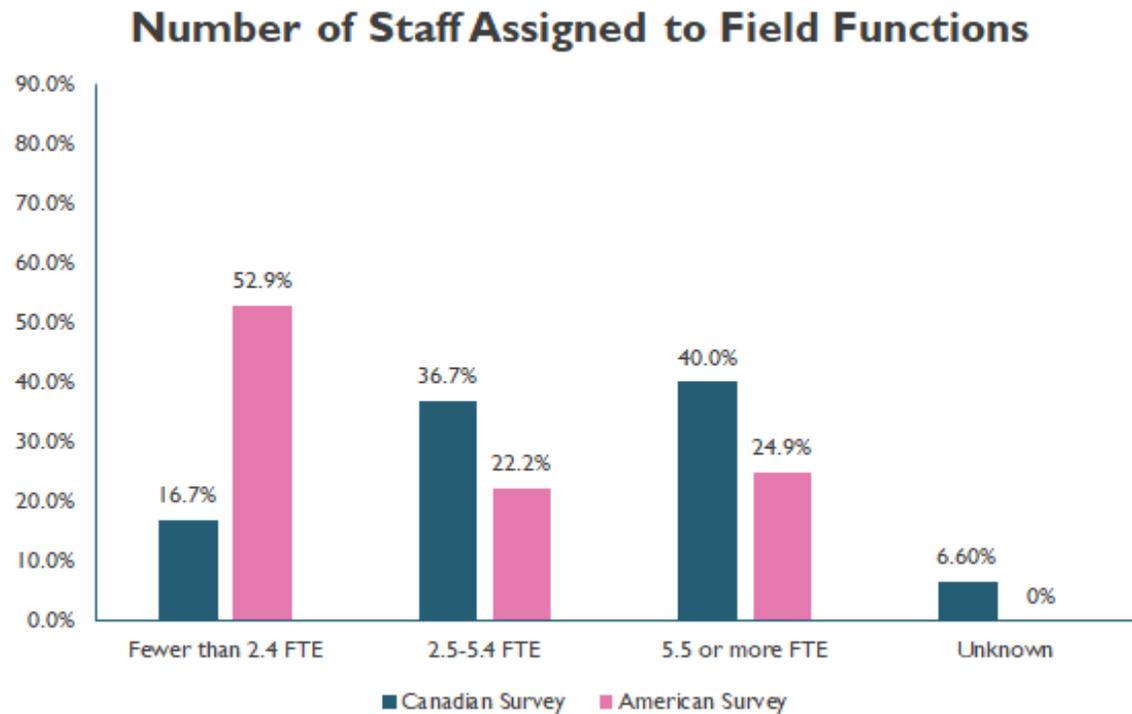


Figure 3. Comparison of the number of staff assigned to field education functions in Canada versus the US.

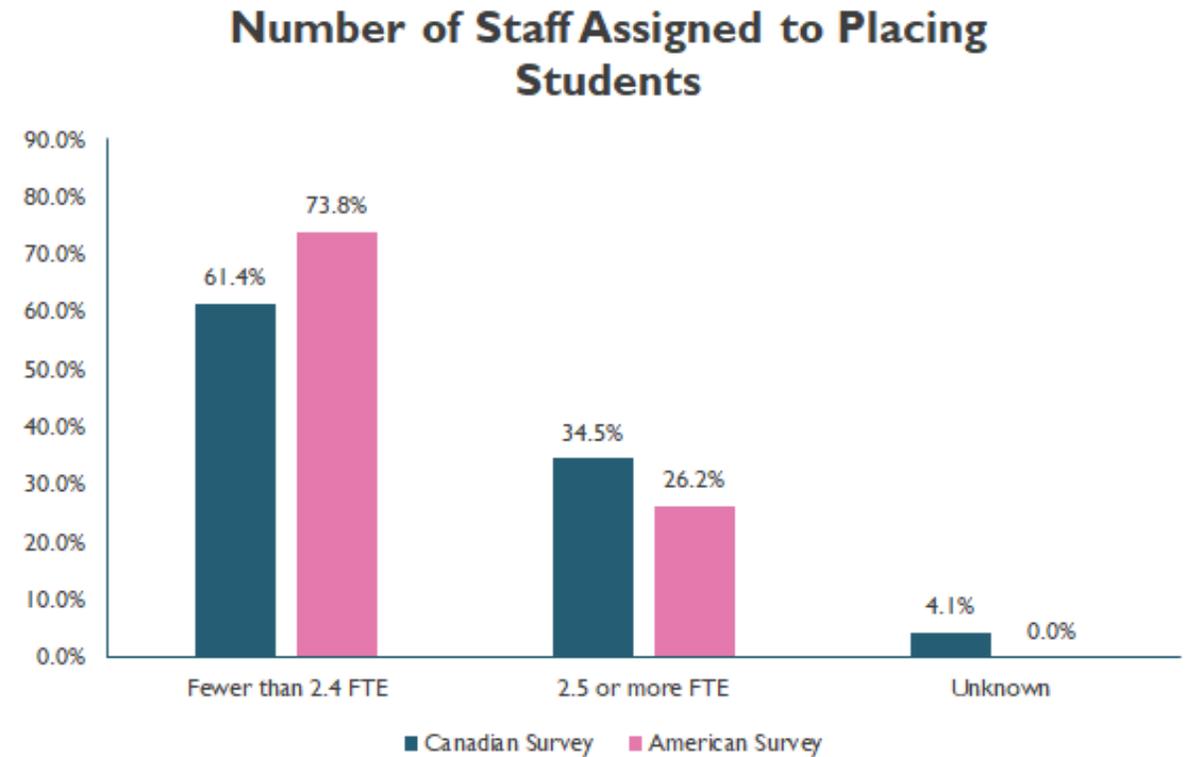


Figure 4. Comparison of the number of staff assigned placing students within field agencies in Canada versus the US.

FECD PERCEPTIONS ON FIELD EDUCATION RESOURCES

Statement	Canadian Survey		American Survey	
	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree
Field education receives adequate resources overall, including staffing, financial resources, technology, and technical support, for its programs and operations at my institution.	59.4%	40.6%	39.3%	60.7%
The field team has adequate staffing resources to ensure that placements provide the full range of expected learning activities and experiences.	34.4%	65.6%	34.8%	65.2%
Locating appropriate placements based on the range of skills and preparation of students admitted to this institution is very time-consuming.	12.5%	84.4%	10.8%	89.2%
Given the range of expectations for the field director/coordinator and field staff, it is difficult to do everything that is needed.	21.9%	71.9%	20.0%	80.0%
Institutional priorities provide incentives for full-time, tenure track teaching and research faculty members (beyond those already assigned to field education functions) to participate in field education functions.	65.6%	15.6%	80.2%	19.8%*

Table 1. Comparison of FECD perceptions on Field Education resources, staffing, and time in Canada versus the US.

*Rounded value

** Responses for “N/A” were not included in the above table.

FECD PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT PLACEMENTS

Statement	Canadian Survey		American Survey	
	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree
Having enough appropriate placements for the number of students admitted to this social work program is a significant, ongoing challenge	12.5%	87.5%	27.7%	72.3%*
Pressures to increase student enrollment at my institution have affected the field education process, including identifying and providing appropriate placements for students.	34.4%	56.3%	45.0%*	55.0%
Because of large numbers of students, it is sometimes necessary to place students in field education settings that we would otherwise not choose to use.	25.0%	75.0%	56.9%	43.1%
Out of necessity, the field team often utilizes non-BSW or non-MSW supervisors to supervise students in field education.	34.4%	65.6%	45.8%	54.2%*
It is difficult to cultivate new field placement opportunities because of the complexity of students' needs and requests related to field education, often necessitating the design of unique and individualized placement experiences	25.0%	68.8%	48.6%	51.4%

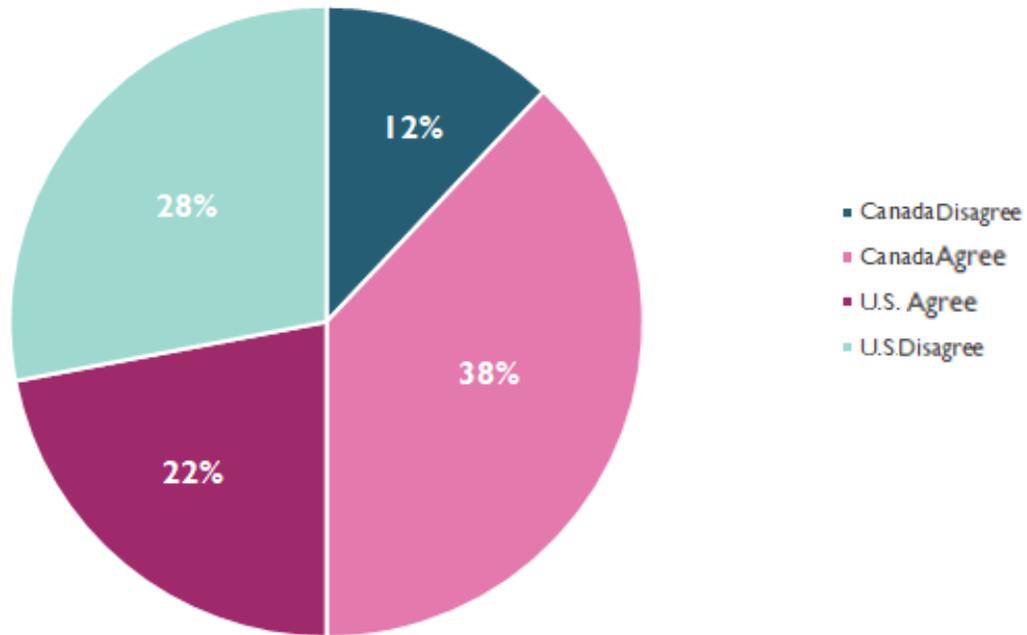
Table 2. Comparison of FECD perceptions on student placements and student demands for placements in Canada versus the US.

*Rounded value
 ** Responses for “N/A” were not included in the above table.

Statement

“Because of large numbers of students, it is sometimes necessary to place students in field education settings that we would otherwise not choose to use.”

Field Education Setting Would Not Otherwise Choose



FECD PERCEPTIONS ON STUDENT PLACEMENTS

FECD PERCEPTIONS ON AGENCIES AND FIELD INSTRUCTORS

Statement	Canadian Survey		American Survey	
	Disagree	Agree	Agree	Disagree
Most community agencies are committed to providing quality field instruction on an ongoing basis.	9.4%	87.5%	7.3%	92.7%*
Field education opportunities depend heavily upon the willingness of agencies and their social workers to provide voluntarily field instruction.	0.0%	93.8%	2.1%	97.9%
Within the past five years, it seems that agencies have been struggling to provide field instruction, as agency budgets have been cut and staff positions lost.	6.2%	90.6%	20.9%	79.1%
Within the past five years, placement disruptions due to changes in agency staffing or funding have become more common.	3.2%	87.5%	36.7%	63.3%
My school/program is developing partnerships with community agencies to enhance collaboration in field education from year to year.	9.3%	84.4%	7.1%	92.9%

Table 3. Comparison of FECD perceptions regarding relationships with field agencies and recruitment of field instructors in Canada versus the US.

*Rounded value

** Responses for “N/A” were not included in the above table.

DISCUSSION

Lack of Resources

- Lack of administrative support
- More staff to place/match students to field placements
- Lack of time for FECDs
- Funding & budget challenges

Number & Quality of Field Placements

- Enough appropriate placements for students
- Placements are heavily dependent on the willingness of agencies to provide voluntary field instruction
- Agencies are committed to providing quality field instruction

Impacts of Neoliberalism

- Increased student enrollment
- Reduced retention of field instructors
- Disruptions in student placements

LIMITATIONS

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- Canadian survey administered during COVID-19
 - Five-year gap between Canadian & American surveys
 - Discrepancies due to adaptation of survey to Canadian context
 - Substantial difference in sample sizes
 - American sample much larger than Canada
 - Difference in response rate between US & Canada
 - Canada had a much higher response rate

RECOMMENDATIONS & DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- Concerted efforts to expanded study of field education across multiple countries
- Further exploration into the perspectives of non-FECD
 - Students
 - Field instructors
 - Community agencies/partners
- Focused research into Indigenous and anti-racist models of field education
- Expand research to other countries to determine best practices

CONCLUSION



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- This study provided a better understanding of their field education programs.
- It is apparent that there are some shared challenges faced by field education in both Canada and the United States.
- We hope the survey findings will increase awareness of the critical state of field education.
- Our goal is to move forward to develop more sustainable models of field education.

Discussant: Issues

- The Challenge of Comparison
- Macro Influences: Regional and Nation Government Funding
- Macro Influences: Accrediting Bodies for Schools of Social Work

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QUESTIONS?

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