



Transforming the Field
Education Landscape

TFEL WEBINAR

Student Voices in the Field Education Landscape

Presenters: Allison Iriye (she/her) and Monika Pakstas (she/her)

Discussant: Dr. David Nicholas

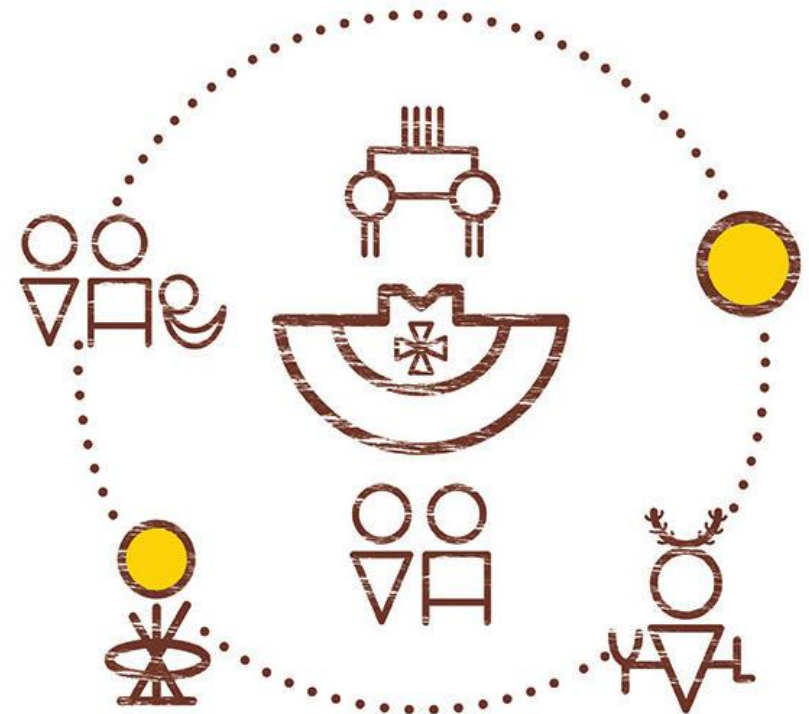
Host: Dr. Vibha Kaushik

March 29, 2021

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The University of Calgary respectfully acknowledges the traditional territories of the people of the traditional territories of the people of the 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.



ii' taa'poh'to'p
University of Calgary Office of Indigenous Engagement




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Education Landscape

The Transforming the Field Education Landscape (TFEL) project is funded in part by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Partnership Grant: Talent (2019-2024)

CRSH  SSHRC



How would you describe the
current state of social work
field education?

WHAT IS FIELD EDUCATION?

"...[f]ield is the site where students learn to integrate and apply the values, knowledge, complex practices and skills of our profession. Students are socialized to think and act like a social worker." (Bogo, 2015, p. 318).

SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON FIELD EDUCATION IN CANADA

- Social work field education is in a state of crisis in Canada (Ayala et al., 2018)
- We have heard more from university faculty and agency staff, (Ayala et al., 2018; TFEL, 2020; Clarke & Drolet, 2014), who are also important stakeholders, but not as much from students
- Students have a unique insider perspective
- Students have experienced field education directly

Do any past or current students here have brief perspectives or experiences on field education that they would like to share?

RESEARCH QUESTION:

What are social work students' perspectives of social work field education in Canada?

DIALOGUE CIRCLES

- Rooted in Indigenous practices (Pranis, 2014), restorative justice (City of Vancouver, n.d.), and group processing (Shulman, 2016)
- Uses focus group methodology (Morgan, 2016)
- All participants are valued, respected, and given opportunity to contribute
- Initial intention to facilitate the dialogue circles at the CASWE conference in 2020, but the project was moved to virtual setting due to COVID-19 pandemic

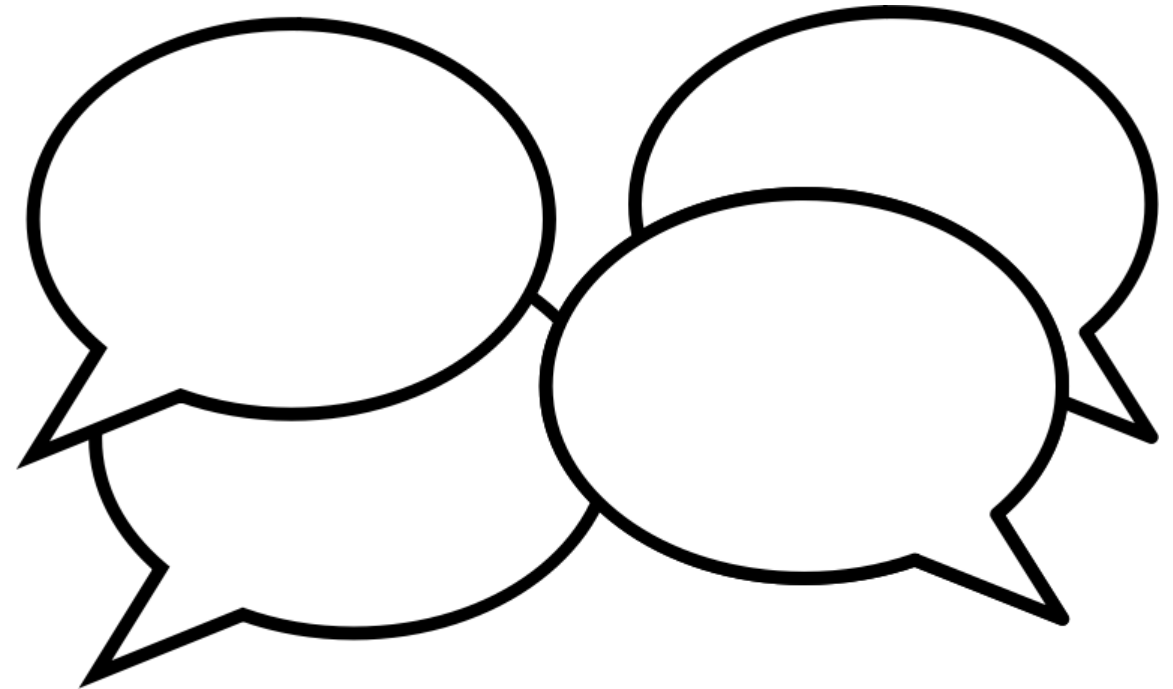
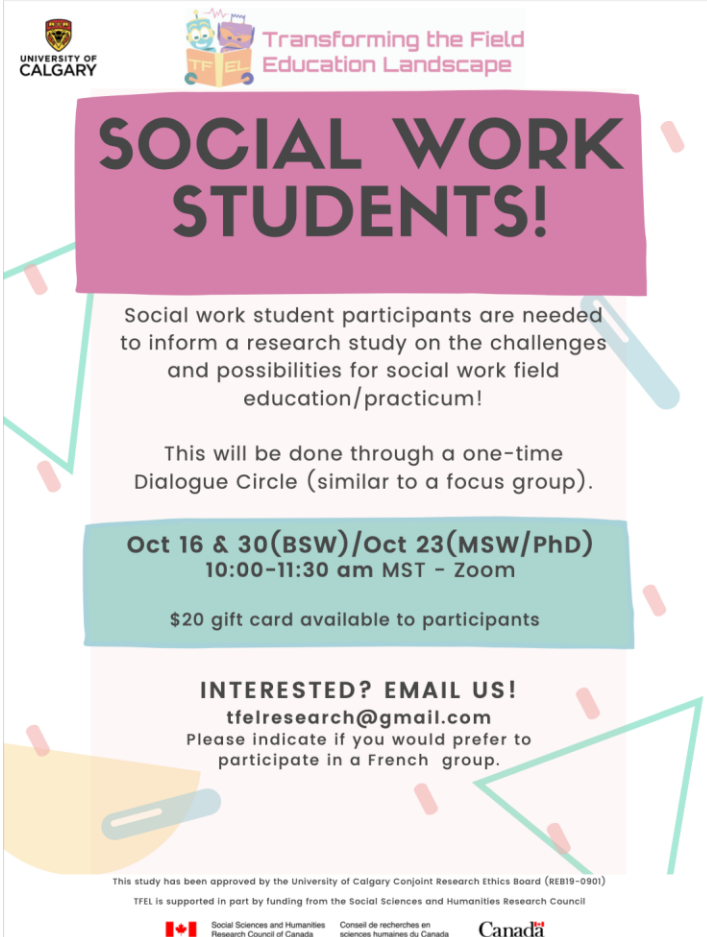


Image from: <https://cele.sog.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/conversation.png>

RECRUITMENT

- The study was open to any current undergraduate or graduate social work student enrolled in a CASWE-ACFTS-accredited program
- Reached out to social work students across the country
- Interested students emailed the research assistants directly
- Recruited 28 students in total



The poster is a vertical rectangular flyer with a light pink background. At the top left is the University of Calgary logo. To its right is the 'Transforming the Field Education Landscape' logo, which includes a small graphic of two people. The main title 'SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS!' is in large, bold, black letters on a pink rectangular background. Below this, the text describes the need for social work student participants for a research study on challenges and possibilities for social work field education/practicum. It specifies that the study will be done through a one-time Dialogue Circle (similar to a focus group). The dates and times are listed as 'Oct 16 & 30 (BSW)/Oct 23 (MSW/PhD)' from 10:00-11:30 am MST on Zoom. A \$20 gift card is offered to participants. The contact information 'INTERESTED? EMAIL US! tfelresearch@gmail.com' is provided, along with a request to indicate if the participant prefers a French group. At the bottom, there is a small line of text stating that the study has been approved by the University of Calgary Conjoint Research Ethics Board (REB19-0901) and is supported in part by funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. Logos for the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Canadian government are at the very bottom.

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

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SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS!

Social work student participants are needed to inform a research study on the challenges and possibilities for social work field education/practicum!

This will be done through a one-time Dialogue Circle (similar to a focus group).

Oct 16 & 30 (BSW)/Oct 23 (MSW/PhD)
10:00-11:30 am MST - Zoom

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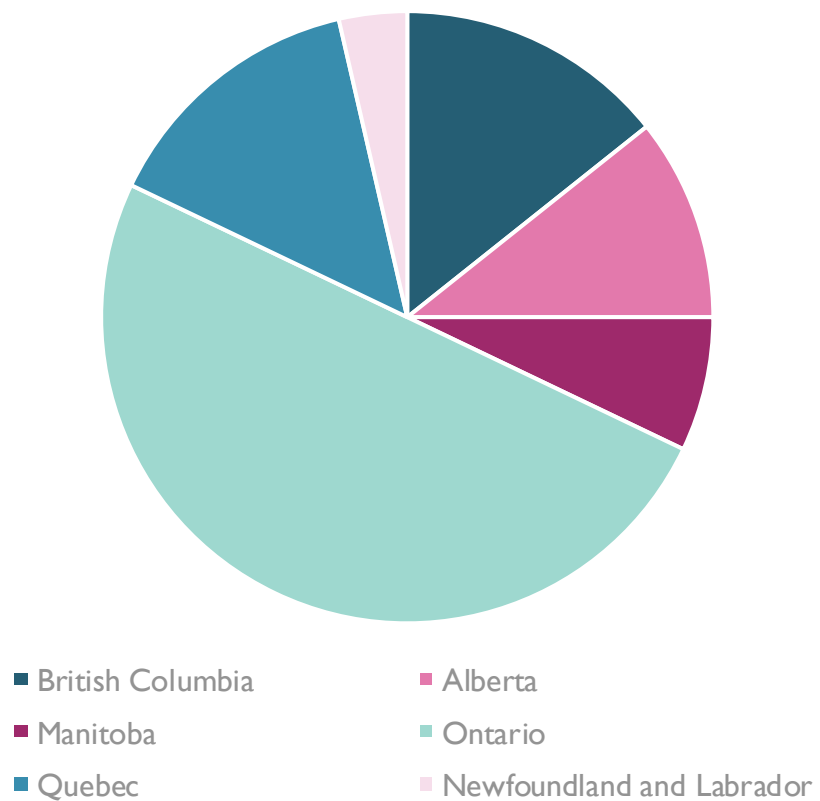
INTERESTED? EMAIL US!
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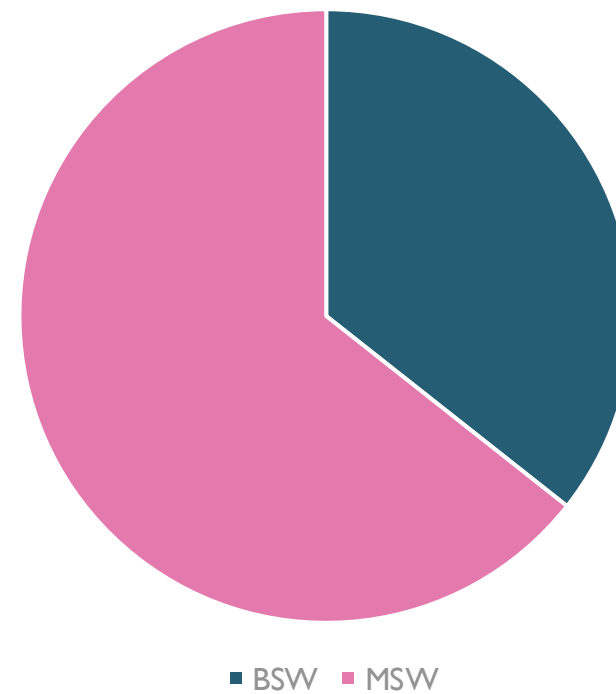
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada
Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada
Canada

THE PARTICIPANTS (N=28)

Province of Study



Program



THE DIALOGUE CIRCLES

- Eight virtual dialogue circles between July and November 2020
- Facilitated over Zoom by TFEL research assistants
- 7 conducted in English, 1 in French
- Nine questions prompting reflections
- Ended with a reflection of themes shared by participants



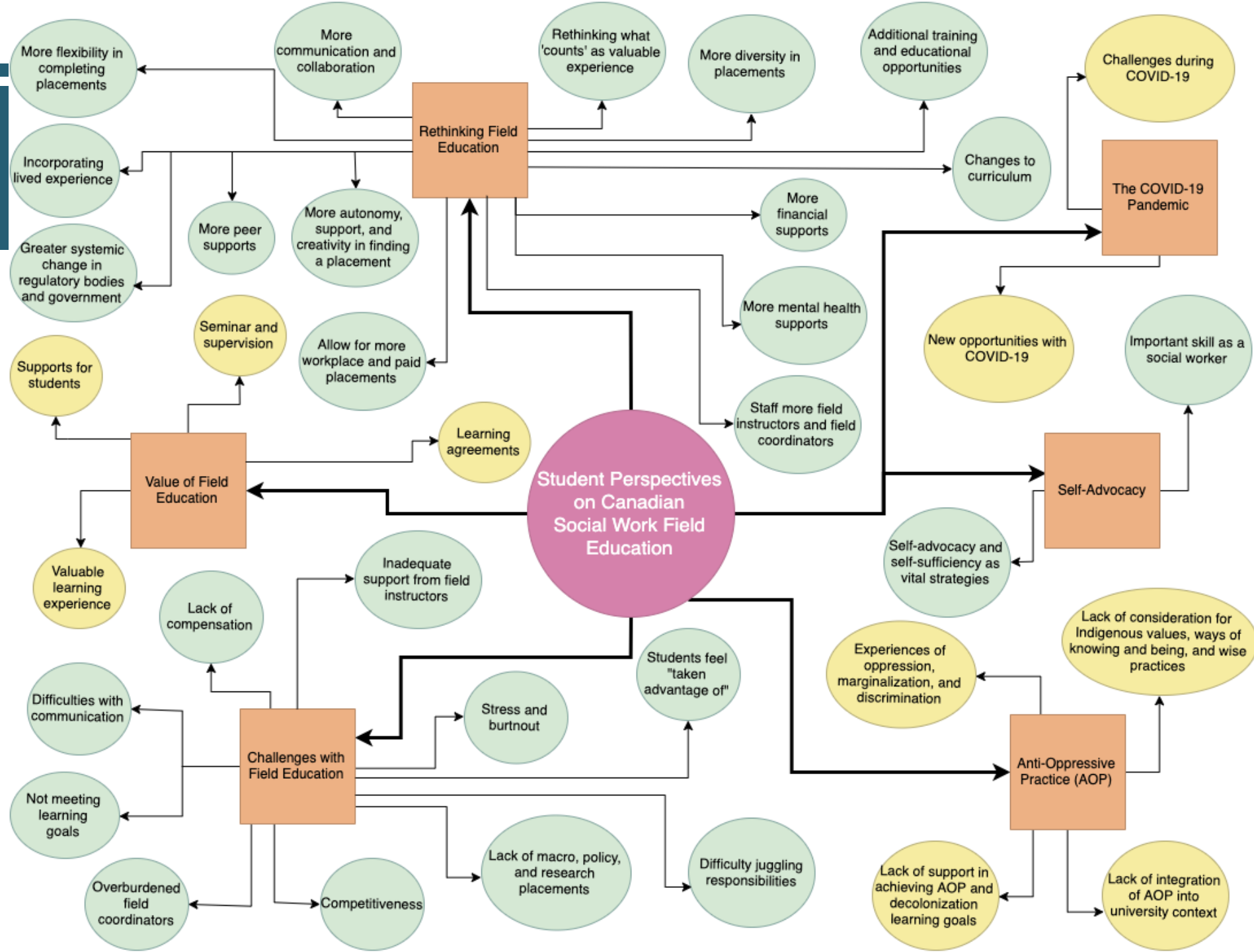
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ANALYSIS

- From verbatim transcriptions, we used thematic analysis based on the work of Fonteyn et al. 2008:
 - Independent familiarization
 - Individual coding
 - Codebook creation
 - Collaborative final coding
 - Listing quotes for each code
 - Codebook revisions
 - Theme book creation



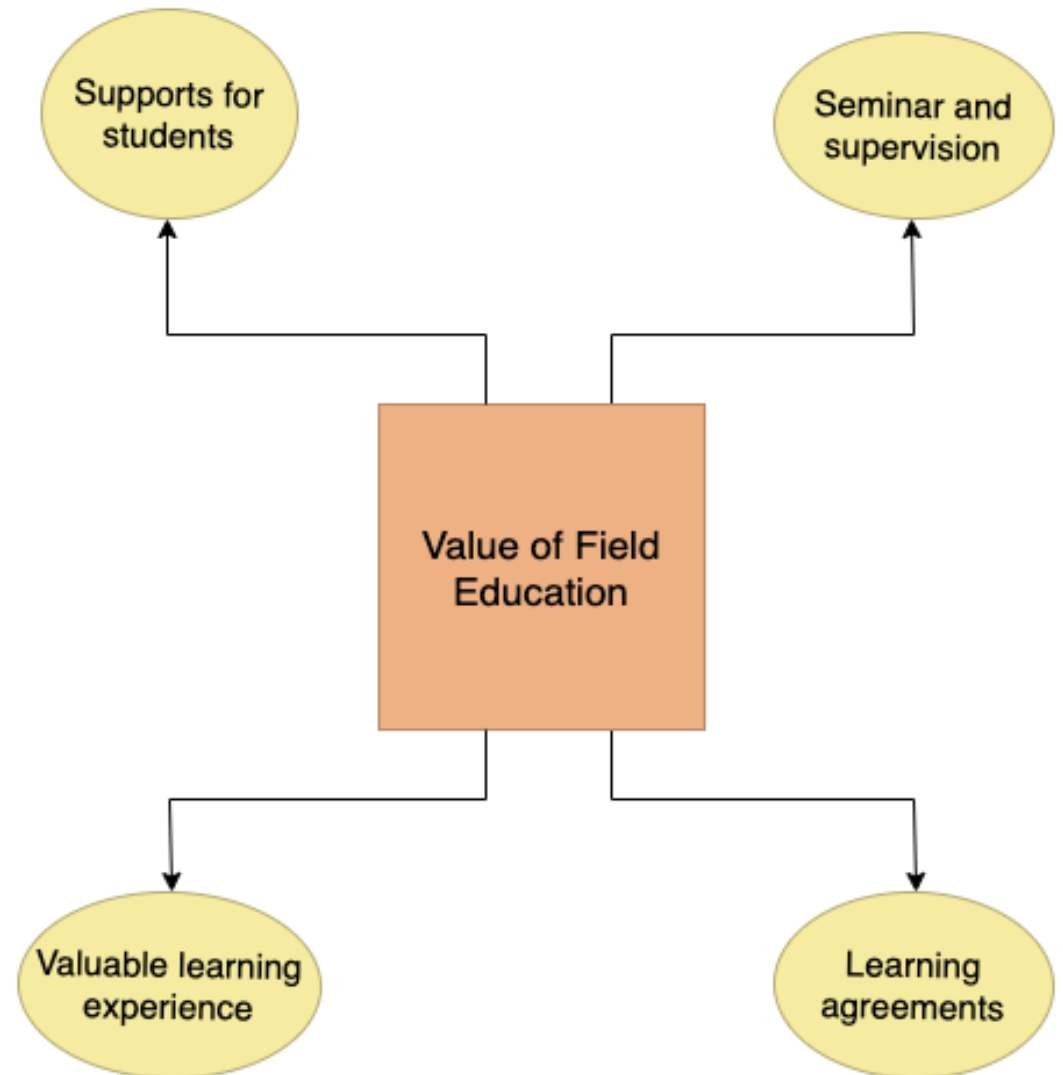
FINDINGS



THEME: THE VALUE OF FIELD EDUCATION

*“[H]aving the field placement opportunity is in fact a really great part of the program...I think without it, I would not get the kind of education that I need and that my future clients deserve me to have had so I’m really glad, even though there’s troubles with the field placement sometimes in how it gets implemented I think it’s a really **important** part of the BSW program.”*

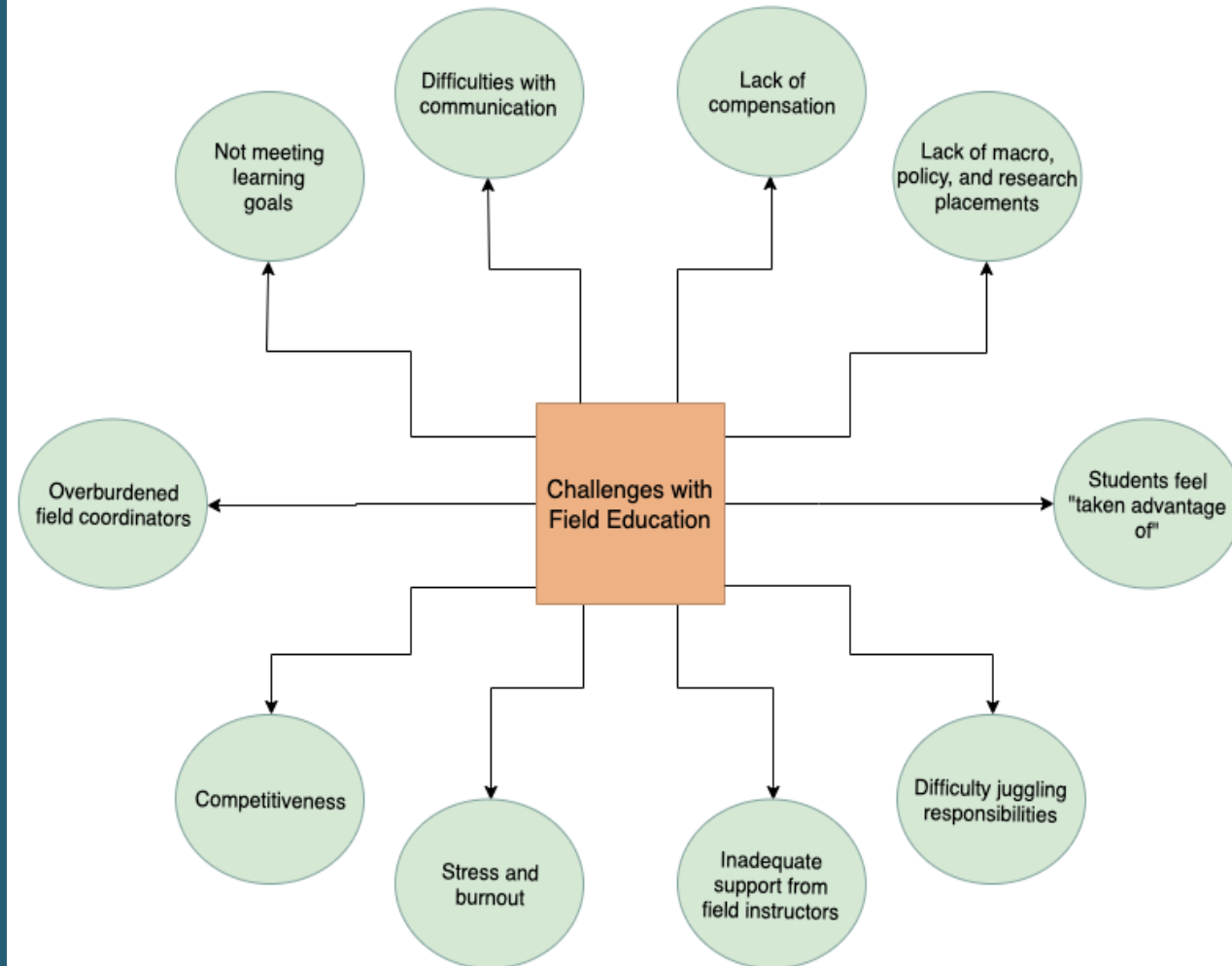
- BSW Student



THEME: CHALLENGES WITH FIELD EDUCATION

*“When someone asks me how I’ve been managing in light of these challenges, the only thought that comes to my mind is **burnout**. I’ve, that’s what I’ve been doing. And you know, I guess, I guess that’s what comes with going back to school when you have three children. I had children really young, and I went back to school as a single mom, and now here I am doing my Master’s, and even when I was in my BSW when we weren’t able to do placements within our paid place of employment, I was juggling two part-time jobs outside of my full-time placement and had my three children and I was just go go go...like 24 hours a day, 7 days a week...and I struggled with my mental health after my BSW, I really really struggled, it took me a while to come back from that.”*

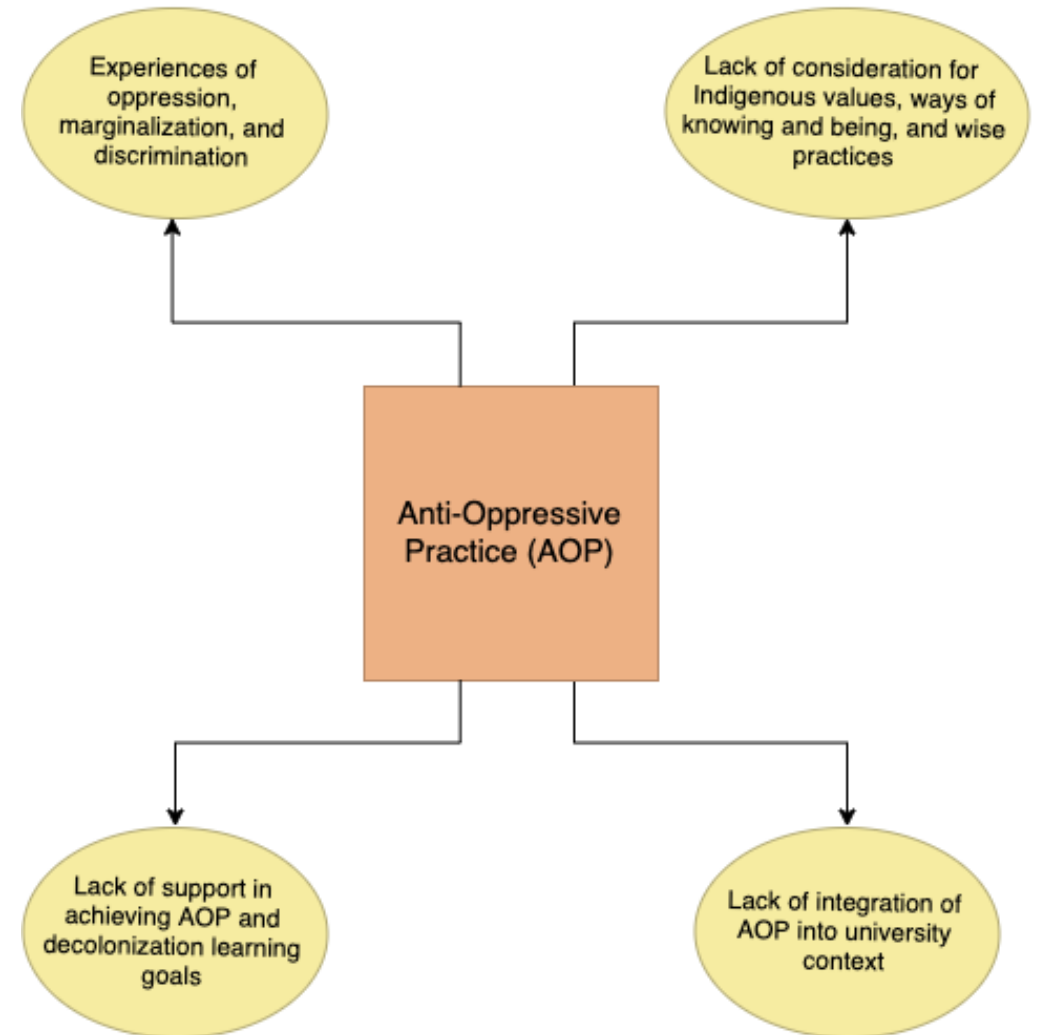
- MSW Student



THEME: ANTI-OPPRESSIVE PRACTICE

*“[T]hat’s what I’d like to see moving forward...what can we implement that’s truly **decolonizing**...the way that we’re taught? And then deconstructing our own system that you know doesn’t just oppress us as social workers but the people that we work with when we come out of that education.”*

- MSW Student



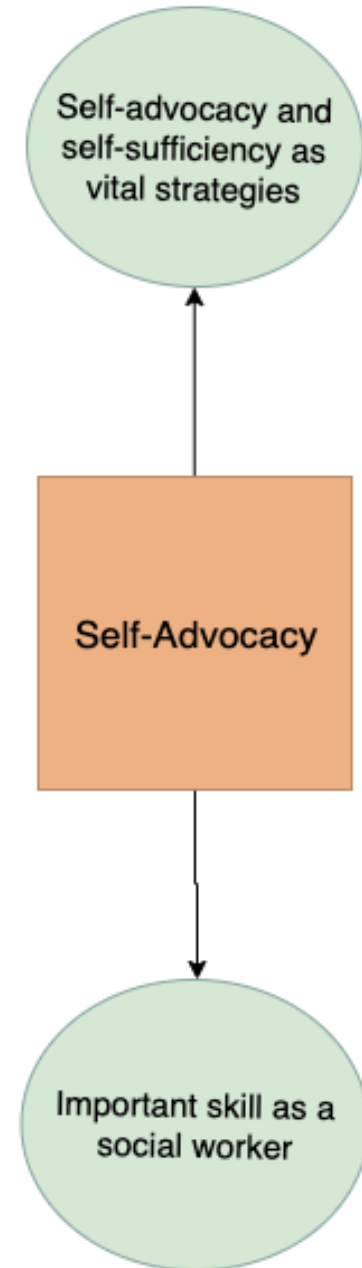
THEME: SELF-ADVOCACY

*“I feel like field [education] has great opportunities for students, but it can be limited if you don’t **advocate for yourself** as a student, especially for the field that you want and the one that you feel that you deserve.”*

- MSW Student

*“I think self-advocacy for myself. I also see it as... an opportunity to kind of like practice my advocacy skill for social practice. If I can't advocate for myself, how am I supposed to be expected to **advocate for my clients?**”*

- BSW Student



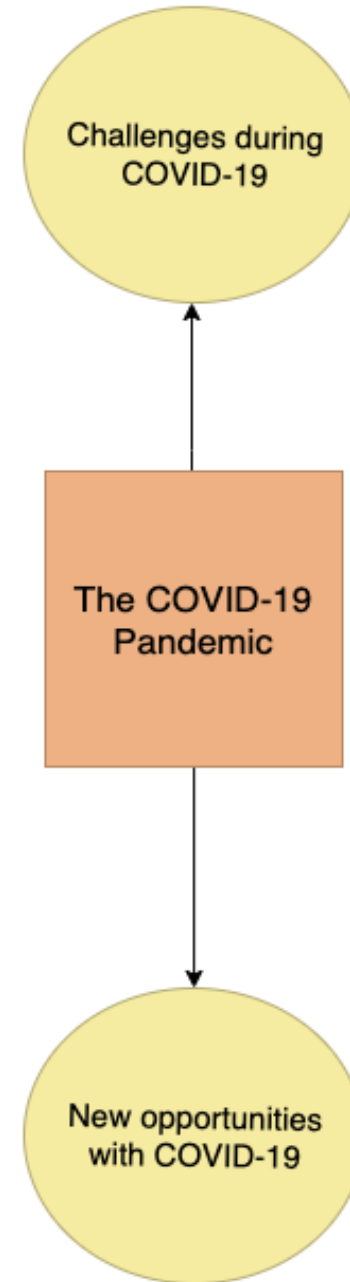
THEME: THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

*“I think right now obviously I’ll just blanket statement and say COVID [is a challenge]...scheduling and virtual remote placements are a **challenge**. Agencies are not used to them, our schools are certainly not used to them, we’re not used to them, nobody’s really ready to take it on.”*

- MSW Student

*“I actually think we’re going to be a generation of social workers that come out of this knowing how to interact with, build relationships with and get that **experience** in the virtual world.”*

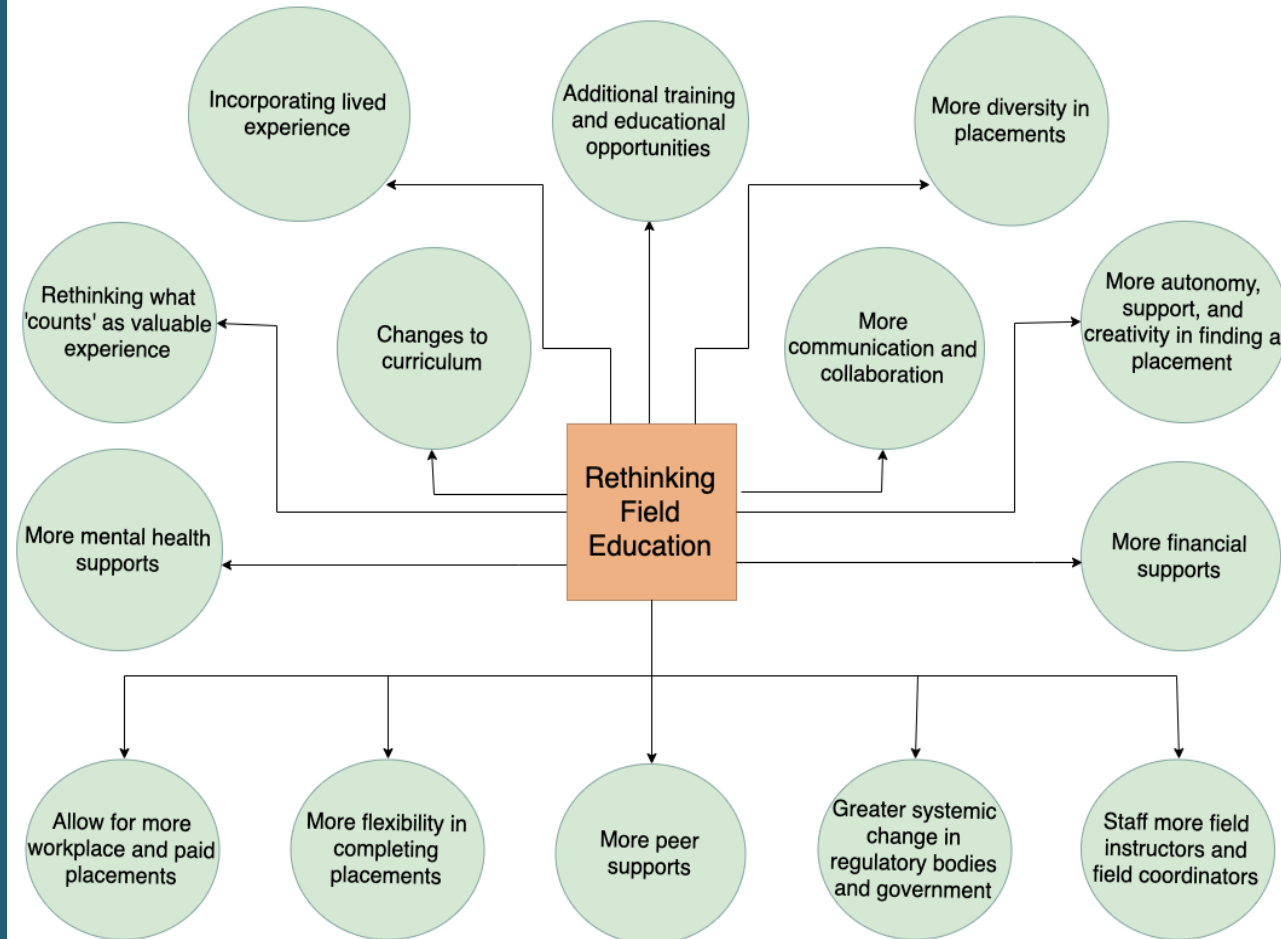
- MSW Student



THEME: RETHINKING FIELD EDUCATION

*“...[I]n talking about wise practice, it would be really interesting to see field education move to a place where...we are able to **incorporate our lived experience** and **our traditional knowledge and stories** into the way that we do our field placement...maybe that looks like a part-time placement for single moms so that they can complete it without completely depleting their financial means.”*

- MSW Student



DISCUSSION QUESTION:

How do these findings relate to your experiences?

DISCUSSION



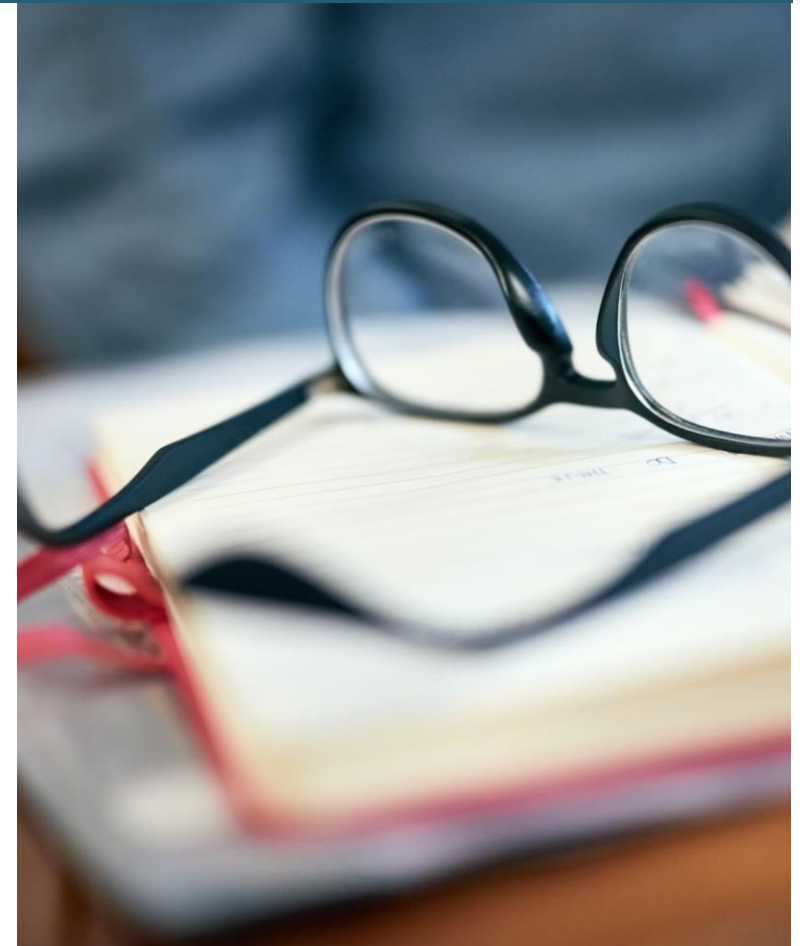
- Field education is an essential component of social work education that allows students the opportunity to practice their skills and obtain tangible experience to benefit their development as social workers (Gelman & Lloyd, 2008; Bogo, 2015)
- Students have valuable and useful insight into the field education experience; their perspectives should be utilized to inform program development (Ralph, Walker, and Wimmer, 2008)
- Important to recognize unique contexts that lead to points of tension in the data, such as contradicting experiences
- Social work students are facing significant challenges affecting their learning (Ayala et al., 2018)

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- Small sample size, majority from Ontario
- Inherent bias
- Structured question and answer format
- Former students as participants
- French to English translation
- Novel context of COVID-19
- Points of tension from different contexts

MOVING FORWARD

- More research to develop better understanding
- Integration with other TFEL research projects
- Five key recommendations:
 - Communication and collaboration among universities, students, agencies, organizations, and policy makers.
 - Hiring more staff (i.e., field education coordinators, field instructors, etc.).
 - Developing more financial supports for students.
 - Incorporating anti-oppressive and anti-racist values into field education.
 - Continuing to explore flexible and non-traditional opportunities for field placements.



CONCLUSIONS

- As informed by their unique insider perspectives, social work student participants have vocalized the need for changes in field education
- Similarities in reflections among participants and in the literature
- Important to recognize and incorporate the voices of social work students in addressing the crisis in field education





QUESTIONS?

For more information
about the partnership please contact:
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@TFELProject



www.tfelproject.com

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Project Director
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