



Transforming the Field
Education Landscape

VIRTUAL FIELD SUMMIT MODELS FOR INTEGRATING RESEARCH AND PRACTICE IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

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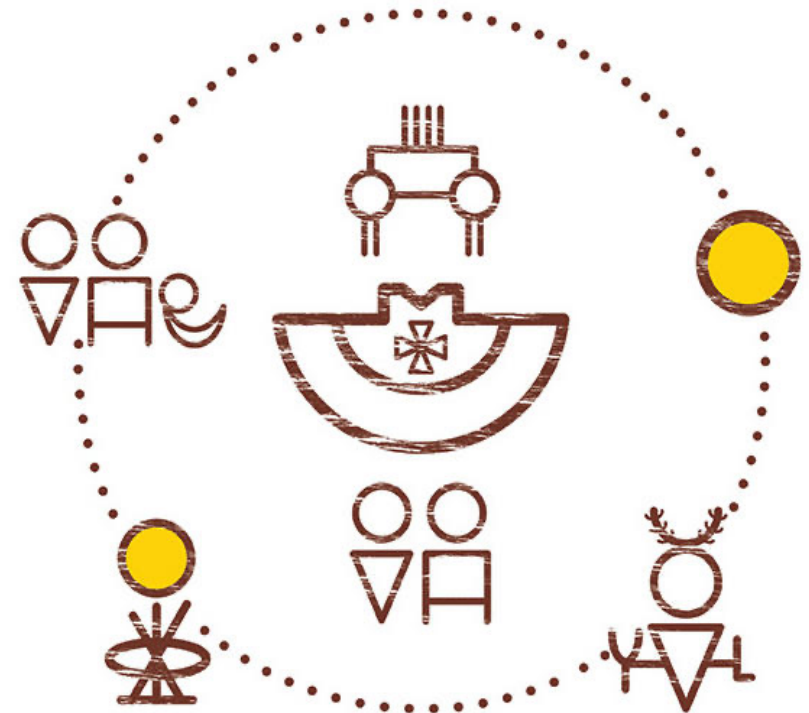
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CRSH  SSHRC

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As this meeting is being hosted from Calgary, we respectfully acknowledge 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.

The people presenting and attending this workshop are living across this land, from coast to coast. As such, we recognize that we are situated on the traditional territories of diverse Indigenous Nations and Peoples.



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

MODELS FOR INTEGRATING RESEARCH AND PRACTICE IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

- Introduction to presenters and workshop – housekeeping items
- Scan of CASWE-ACFTS accredited BSW and MSW programs – what their websites reveal about research opportunities in field practica and research internships/projects
- Reflections on professional and personal growth while completing the scan – what Melissa learned about social work and research
- Panel - reflections by students who have completed research-based field practica and/or research internships or research projects
- Questions and comments
- Closing and evaluations

SCAN OF CASWE-ACFTS ACCREDITED SOCIAL WORK PROGRAMS: WHAT THEIR WEBSITES REVEAL ABOUT RESEARCH IN FIELD PRACTICA AND RESEARCH INTERNSHIPS/PROJECTS

- Reviewed the websites of CASWE-ACFTS accredited English-speaking social work education programs – 30 BSW programs and 23 MSW programs at 32 universities
- A similar review of CASWE-ACFTS accredited French-speaking social work education programs will be completed this summer
- Are BSW and MSW students allowed and/or encouraged to engage in research and/or research activities during their field practicum?
- Are there other opportunities available for students to engage in research and/or research activities during their program of study (i.e., thesis, research projects, research internships)?

CHALLENGES IN DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Inconsistent language around research and research activities:

- Conflation of 'research' and 'review'. For example, students may be expected to “research potential field placements” or “identify, research, and, where possible, visit agencies/organizations relevant to the client population.”
- Lack of clarity as to what constitutes research in field placements – research per se versus research activities. Often activities are not identified as research (e.g., evaluation, needs assessment).

Missing data:

- 20/30 BSW (67%) and 16/23 MSW (70%) posted field manuals online. Of those with no online field manual, information on field education ranged from some to very little.
- 12/30 BSW (40%) and 10/23 MSW (44%) posted field forms (e.g., learning contracts, evaluations).

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY RESEARCH / RESEARCH ACTIVITIES?

Because the language was neither clear nor consistent across the websites, we needed to come to a shared understanding about what we were looking for in the scan.

- **Research activities** include (but are not limited to):
 - research design, proposal writing, ethics proposals/reviews, design of data collection tools
 - literature reviews, jurisdictional scans, resource gathering, policy reviews
 - data collection (i.e., administering surveys, interviews, focus groups, community meetings)
 - data analysis, knowledge dissemination (i.e., reports, articles, presentations)
 - qualitative or quantitative or mixed methods research; needs assessments, community consultations, evaluations, etc.
- **Research** (per se) involves a more fulsome process, typically from beginning to end (research design to knowledge dissemination)

OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN ABOUT AND PRACTICE RESEARCH IN BSW PROGRAMS

Despite the fact that the CASWE-ACFTS Standards for Accreditation (2014) list as a Core Learning Objective for BSW students, ***Engage in Research*** (3.1; #6):

- 7 of 30 programs (23%) include research skills in the BSW program objectives;
- 23 programs (77%) list a mandatory social work research course;
- 11 programs (37%) offer a research course prior to students completing their first practicum and 24 (80%) before their second practicum.

OPPORTUNITIES TO PRACTICE RESEARCH IN BSW FIELD PRACTICA

Of the 30 English-speaking BSW program websites:

- 6 of the 27 (22%) that list expected outcomes of field practica reference research and/or research skills.
- 14 of the 28 (50%) that list learning objectives of field practica reference research knowledge and/or skills.
- 2 of the 12 (17%) that post field evaluation forms online list research knowledge or skills as criteria for evaluation.

OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN ABOUT AND PRACTICE RESEARCH IN MSW PROGRAMS

Congruent with the CASWE-ACFTS Standards for Accreditation (2014) Core Learning Objective for MSW students, ***Engage in Research*** (3.1; #6):

- 22 of 23 (96%) list a mandatory social work research course;
- 15 (65%) offer a thesis option;
- of those 15 programs, only 3 (20%) require thesis students to complete a field practicum;
- 7 (30%) require that non-thesis students complete a research project or internship.

OPPORTUNITIES TO PRACTICE RESEARCH IN MSW FIELD PRACTICA

On the 23 English-speaking MSW program websites:

- 9 (39%) list research and/or research skills as an expected outcome of their field practicum (almost double the % of BSW programs).
- 4 of the 10 (40%) that post field practicum learning contracts online list research knowledge and/or skills as a learning objective.
- 3 of the 5 (60%) that post field practicum evaluation forms online list research knowledge and/or skills as criteria for evaluation.

SO WHAT DOES THIS SCAN TELL US ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES TO INTEGRATE RESEARCH AND PRACTICE IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION

- It is important to remember that this data is not complete. It was drawn only from university websites – and not all information about BSW and MSW programs is necessarily provided online.
- We believe that both prospective and current students draw much of their information from university websites. Thus, what is visible or not visible on websites influences where perspective students apply – and the choices current students make about their program of study, including their field practicum. If research and/or research activities are not visible as learning opportunities in field, students may not realize or be encouraged to include research or research activities in their learning activities for their field practicum.
- The scan reveals that there are few opportunities for engaging in the practice (in field education, research internships, research projects) – especially in BSW programs. Not surprisingly, there are more research-practice options in MSW programs. At both levels, research-practice opportunities can be enhanced, better supported, made more visible, and better marketed.
- We need consistent and clear language – paired with a shared understanding of what constitutes research - and how research can be integrated into practice opportunities (e.g., field education, research internships, research projects) in social work education.

REFLECTIONS BY STUDENTS ON RESEARCH-BASED FIELD PRACTICA AND OTHER RESEARCH INTERNSHIPS/PROJECTS

The data from this scan tells only part of the story.

The heart of this presentation involves BSW and MSW students and alumna sharing their experience of and reflections on completing research-based field practica - and other research projects and research internships - as part of their social work education program.

First, Melissa will share her reflections on her professional and personal growth while completing the scan – followed by the student panel, featuring Amanda, Heather, Melissa, and Omid.

There will be time following the panel for questions and comments.



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RESEARCH AS LEARNING

REFLECTIONS ON PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL
GROWTH THROUGH RESEARCH ACTIVITY

MELISSA NOBLE

15 JULY 2020



REFLECTION

My greatest growth has come in the deepened understanding of things I thought I already knew and held to be true. The experiential engagement with research in a learning landscape has broadened my point of view and developed my skill set in a way that could only be stimulated by participating in research activities.

PREPARATION IS THE FOUNDATION OF A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT

“If I had one hour to save the world, I would spend fifty-five minutes defining the problem and only 5 minutes finding the solution.”

- Albert Einstein



PREPARATION IS THE FOUNDATION OF A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT

Some of the most critical work in the context of research occurs in the preparatory stages of a project.

- Creating processes
- Methods of storing and managing data
- Constructing questions
- Establishing definitions
- Defining parameters

MAKE TIME FOR “KNOWING” NOT JUST “DOING”

- Engage in reflection
- Evaluate for relevance
- Examine your biases





EXPERIENTIAL
LEARNING
DEEPENS
UNDERSTANDING

Research itself is not just a method of
understanding, but something that
must also be understood




EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING DEEPENS UNDERSTANDING

Research is the very process by which knowledge is created, so if we do not critically approach how the knowledge is formed and by whom, we risk building our practice on a fundamentally flawed foundation.



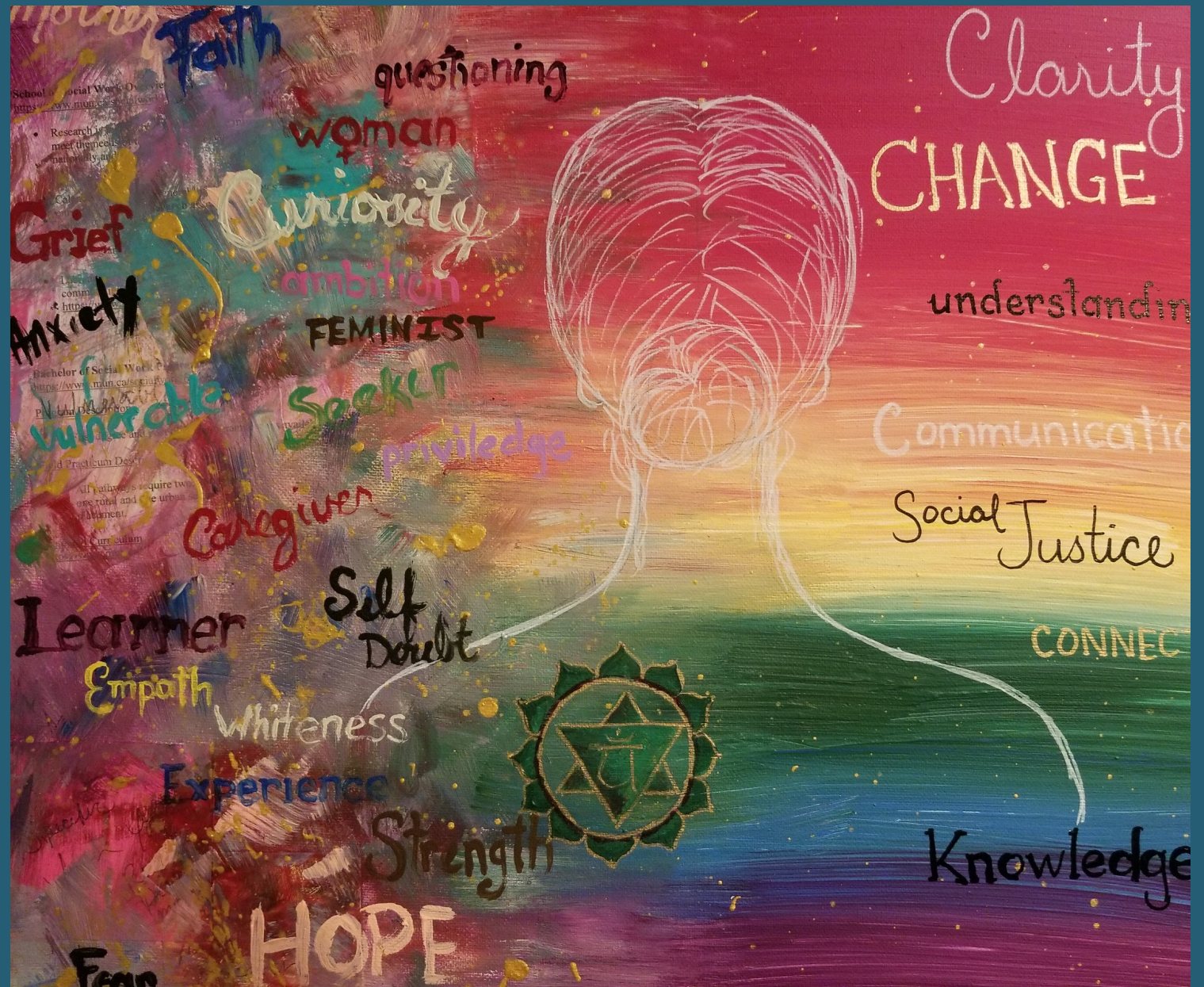
HOW DO I SEE MY
RELATIONSHIP TO
RESEARCH AS A SOCIAL
WORKER?



RESEARCH ALLOWS US TO
TRANSCEND OUR OWN
EXPERIENCES WHILE
SIMULTANEOUSLY PROVIDING A
PLATFORM FOR OUR OWN UNIQUE
POINT OF VIEW.

IT CREATES A UNIVERSAL
LANGUAGE OF UNDERSTANDING
THAT DRIVES CHANGE AND
PROMOTES SOCIAL JUSTICE.

RESEARCH IS AN INTEGRAL
PART OF SOCIAL WORK
PRACTICE



CURRENT TFEL ACTIVITIES

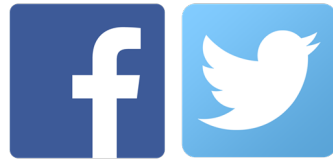
- Interviews on Promising and Wise Practices
 - Recruiting field directors/coordinators, faculty, field instructors, and other field stakeholders for a 30-60 min. interview
- Impact of COVID-19 on Field Education
 - Recruiting BSW and MSW social work students to complete an online survey
- Dialogue Circles
 - Recruiting BSW, MSW, and PhD social work students
- State of Social Work Field Education
 - Recently closed a National survey with field directors/coordinators across Canada
- Virtual Practicum Resources
 - Supporting BSW and MSW practicum students with opportunities to develop resources
- Digital Story Guidebook
 - Developing a resource to support digital storytelling in field seminars
- Field Image Showcase
 - Inviting BSW, MSW, and PhD students to submit an image and a narrative
- Applied Practice Research Module
 - Developing an online training module to facilitate practice research in field education

Contact tfelresearch@gmail.com to participate!

Contact tfelproject@gmail.com to join!

For more information
about the partnership please contact:
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