VIRTUAL FIELD SUMMIT

TRANSFORMING THE FIELD EDUCATION LANDSCAPE (TFEL)

Workshop: Research as Daily Practice
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University of Calgary Office of Indigenous Engagement
Research As Daily Practice
TFEL Virtual Field Summit

Sally St. George, Dan Wulff, and Lauren Birks
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Systematically and reflectively examining our curiosities and ideas from our work in order to better understand what we do and what we could do.
practice/research
Don Schön

. . . research is an activity of practitioners. It is triggered by features of the practice situation, undertaken on the spot, and immediately linked to action.

(The Reflecting Practitioner, 1983, p. 308)
Practice-led Research is

- “initiated in practice, where questions, problems, challenges are identified and formed by the needs of practice and practitioners” and is

- “carried out through practice, using predominantly methodologies and specific methods familiar to us as practitioners.”

(Gray, 1996)
Imagine “research” and “practice” as being the same process, just “languaged” differently.
Knowledge is developed by researchers and applied by practitioners.
Research As Daily Practice

- A form of evidence-based practice.
- Knowledge-in-action or practice-based evidence.
- Inquiry is the central process of how we, as practitioners, practice every day.
Doing Inquiry

- Advocate “leaning into” (Reynolds, 2012) a focus of inquiry that allows the researcher/practitioner to look at “paths to take” while also considering “paths not chosen.”

- Fits within what the practitioner is already doing in the course of ethical practice, rather than being an extra or extraordinary task.
History of Research As Daily Practice

We felt “stuck” with some of our clinical work.

We were seeing similarities across cases.
Practice/Research

Involvement/Question
Assessment/Data
Clients/Participants
Treatment Plan/Analysis
Intervention/Dissemination or Action
Inquiring from a Practice Perspective

Attending to Curiosities
Speculating
Enlisting Partners
Gathering Information
Making Sense
Reflecting-in-Action
Attending to Curiosities

- What words, phrases do our clients use?
- What words, phrases do we as clinicians use?
- What terminology is used in the literature?
- What intrigues you?
Speculating

- Getting more specific regarding what we are curious about
- Trying to formulate key questions
- Imagining possible answers to those questions
Enlisting Partners

- Actively wonder if you are alone in this or if there are others in your agency/practice/circle of colleagues who experience this issue.
- How can clients help?
Gathering Information

- Conversing with clients and colleagues
- Reflecting on your own thoughts/experiences
- Noticing effects and patterns
- Seeking variety/diversity
Making Sense

- What are we understanding/coming to know?
- How are our practices moving in sync with existing social discourses or supporting the status quo?
- What possibilities can arise from alternative ideas to the status quo?
- What questions do they provoke?
- What limitations do they present?
Reflecting-in-Action

- What new questions can we develop that take into consideration the “invisible influences?”
- What new courses of action and joining with others are available to us now? What are new avenues to pursue?
- Are there better questions to pose and pursue?
International

- In this context, what does “change” look like in the work we do?
- How do we adapt/integrate our work with people in the context in ways that support their ways of seeing themselves?
- How would the work we are doing here differ if we were in another location in the world?
Administration and Leadership

- Is our paperwork discrimination free?
- Is there a way that records could also become part of generative and daily practice?
- Do the job position titles and the responsibilities within those positions align?
Social Work in Medical, School, Legal Settings

- What promotes or inhibits team cohesion in our setting?
- What languaging prevails in cross-professional work?
- What social work values are observed or eclipsed?
What are the criteria for good policy writing? Does each word, paragraph, point meet the criteria or do we need to revise?

According to our criteria, what parts of this are defensible? Indefensible?

What would be constitute a “happy ending”? Are we on that path?
Social Justice

- As Vikki Reynolds and colleagues would say, these practices are at the expense of whom? On the backs of whom?
- What are the markers of success? Are they enough?
THEMES
Reflexive
Generative
Local and daily
Participatory
Transdisciplinary
Action-oriented
Important
Involving inquiry that is respectful of practitioners’ time.
Includes an entire cohort of agency practitioners (and their clients).
Uses research methodologies that are **coherent** with the practices being addressed.
Immediate uses of still-evolving knowledge in the practice context.
Honoring practitioners’ abilities to examine their own practices.
Money can be useful sometimes, but not always necessary.
Willing to **adjust inquiry along the way** to better address the issue of interest.
In what ways do you see yourself using these ideas?
References


Research As Daily Practice

Book Chapters


Articles


Articles


CURRENT 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**
  - Analyzing data from 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

- **Near-peer Model for Mentorship**
  - Creating and integrating mentorship into social work education

Contact [tfelresearch@gmail.com](mailto:tfelresearch@gmail.com) to participate!

Contact [tfelproject@gmail.com](mailto:tfelproject@gmail.com) to join!
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