



Transforming the Field  
Education Landscape

## VIRTUAL FIELD SUMMIT

# TRANSFORMING THE FIELD EDUCATION LANDSCAPE (TFEL)

## Workshop: Research as Daily Practice

Sally St. George, Dan Wulff and Lauren Birks

Student Host: Jessica Ossais

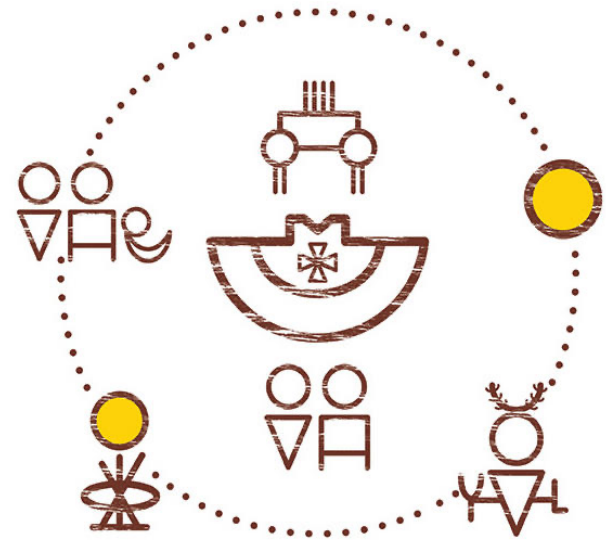
The Transforming the Field Education Landscape (TFEL) project is supported in part by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Partnership Grant: Talent (2019-2024)

CRSH  SSHRC

# TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge territories of the Blackfoot and the people of Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta. The City of Calgary is also home to Metis Nation of Alberta, Region III.



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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

July, 2020





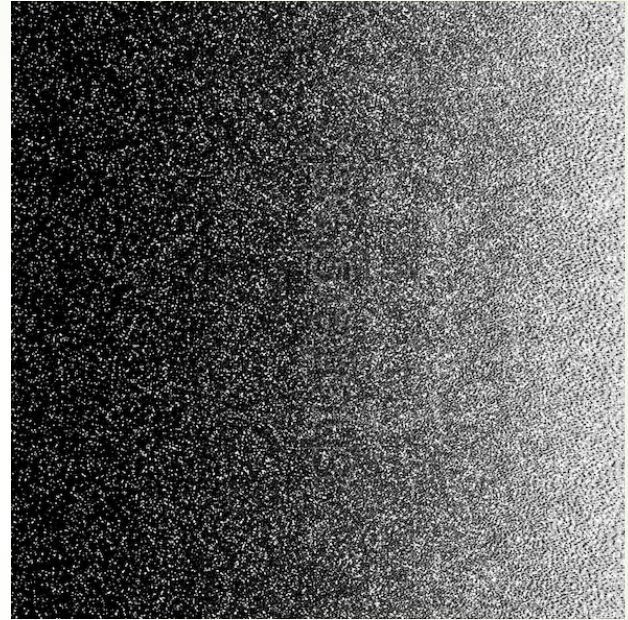
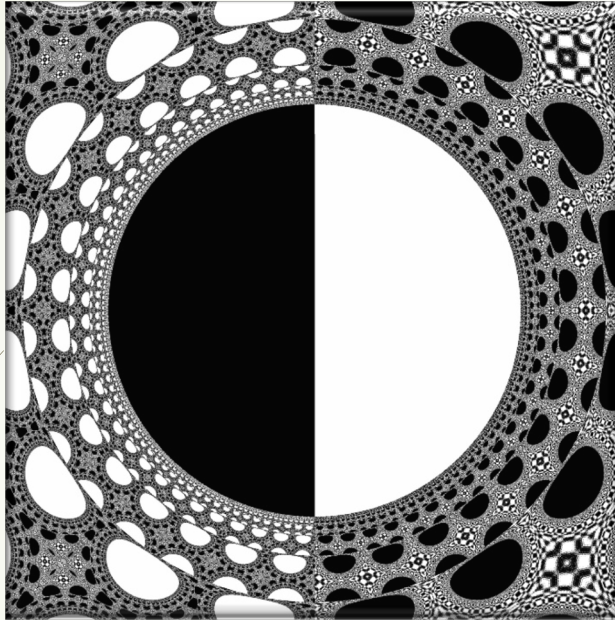


## Definition

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)*



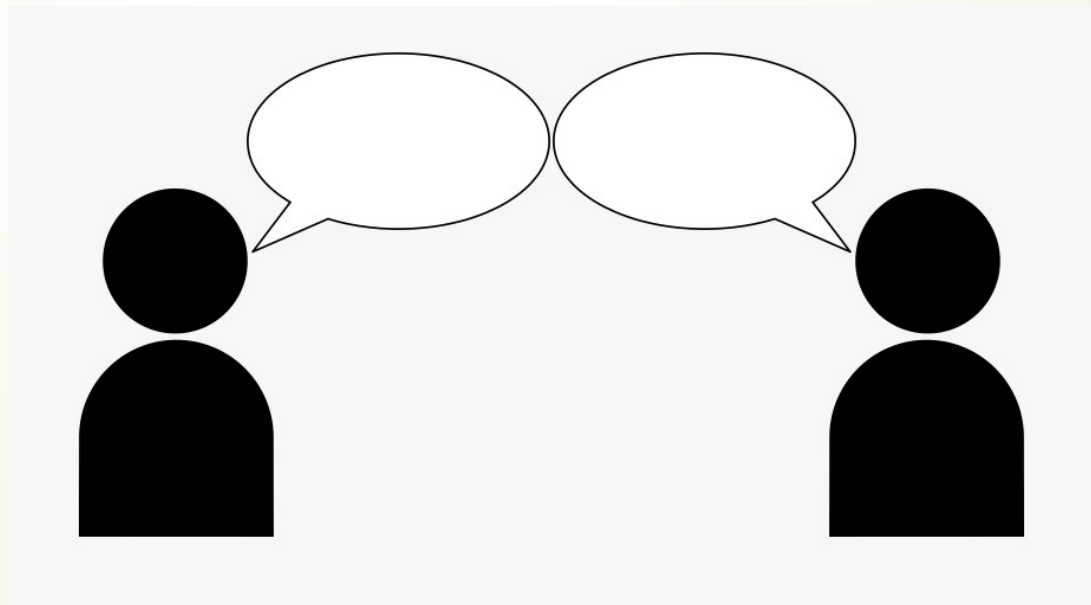
# Practice-led Research is

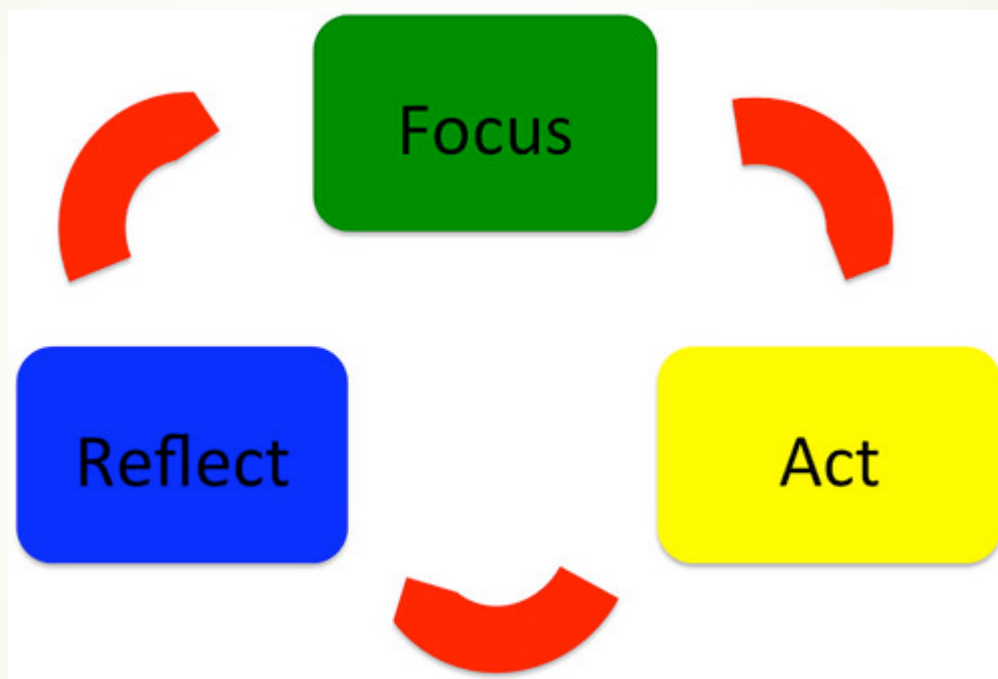
- “initiated in practice, where questions, problems, challenges are identified and formed by the needs of practice and practitioners” and is
- “carried out through practice, using predominantly methodologies and specific methods familiar to us as practitioners.”

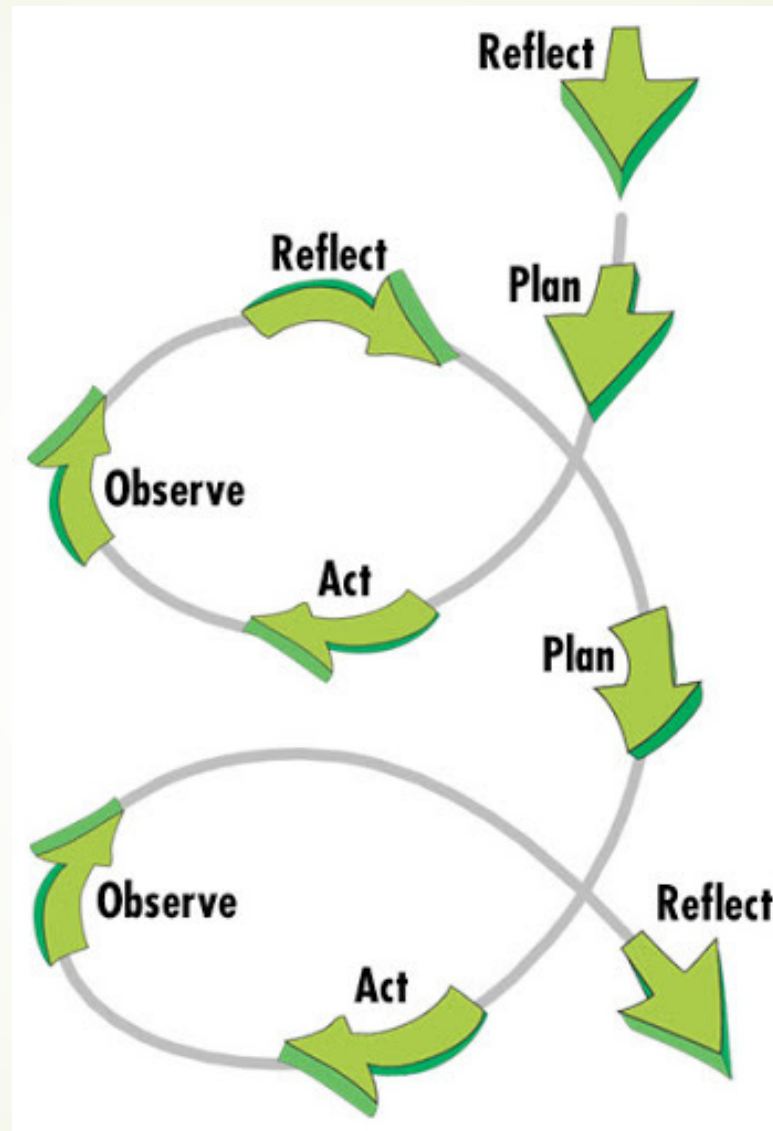
(Gray, 1996)

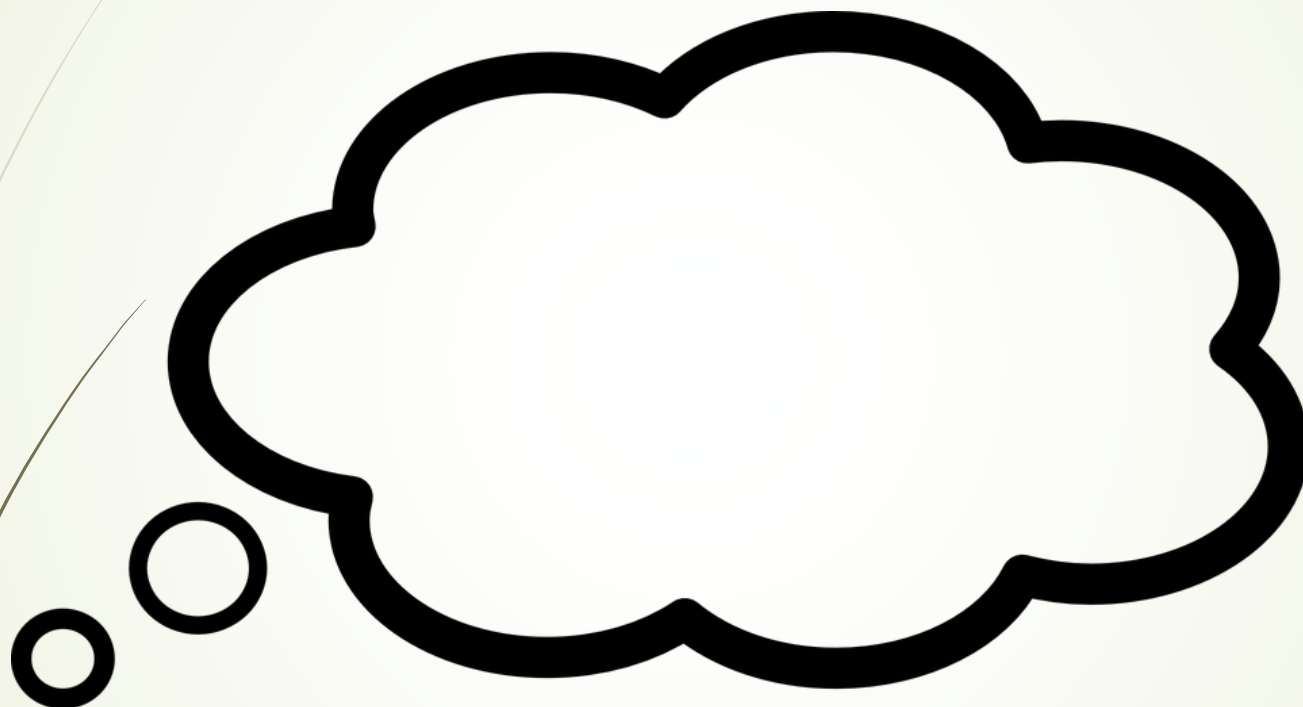


Imagine “research” and  
“practice” as being the  
same process, just  
“languageed” differently.







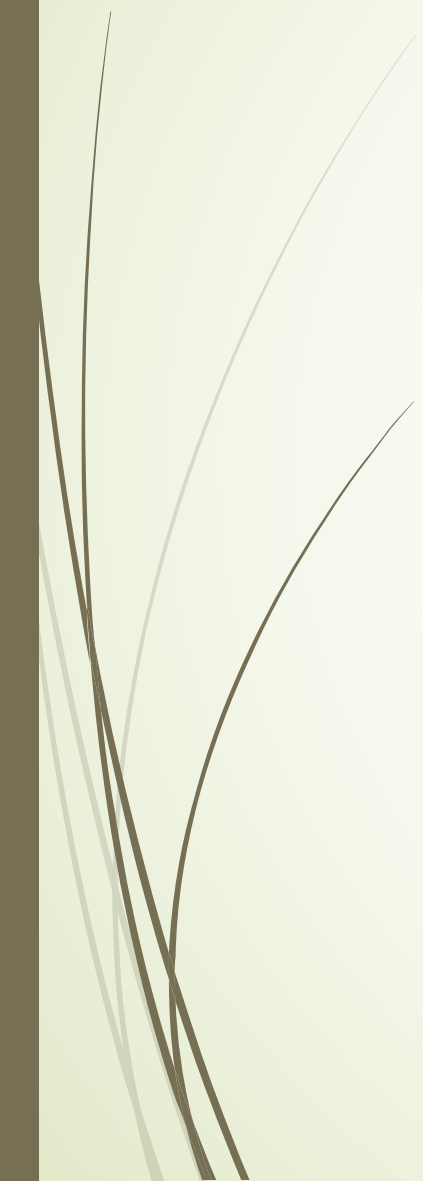




Knowledge is **developed** by  
researchers and **applied** by  
practitioners.



# 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.
- 





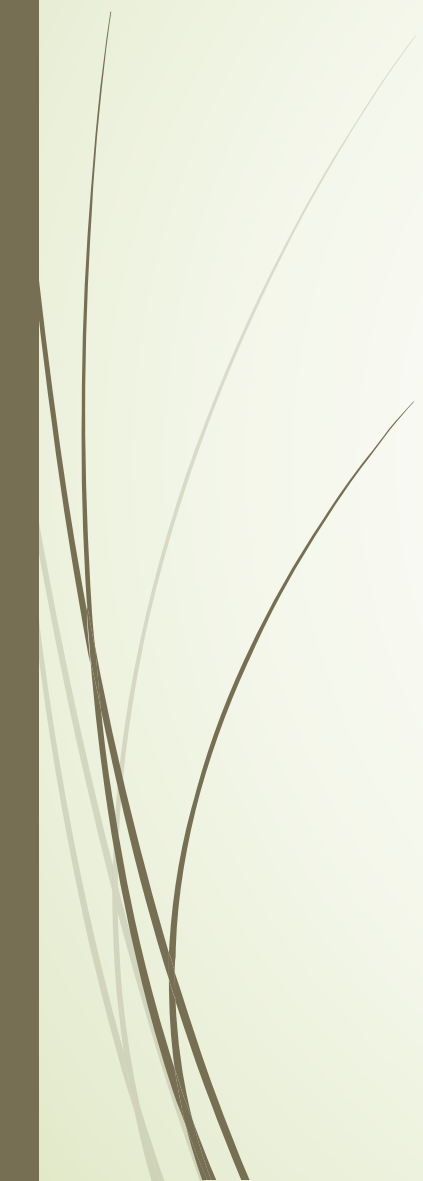
client

science

therapist



# 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





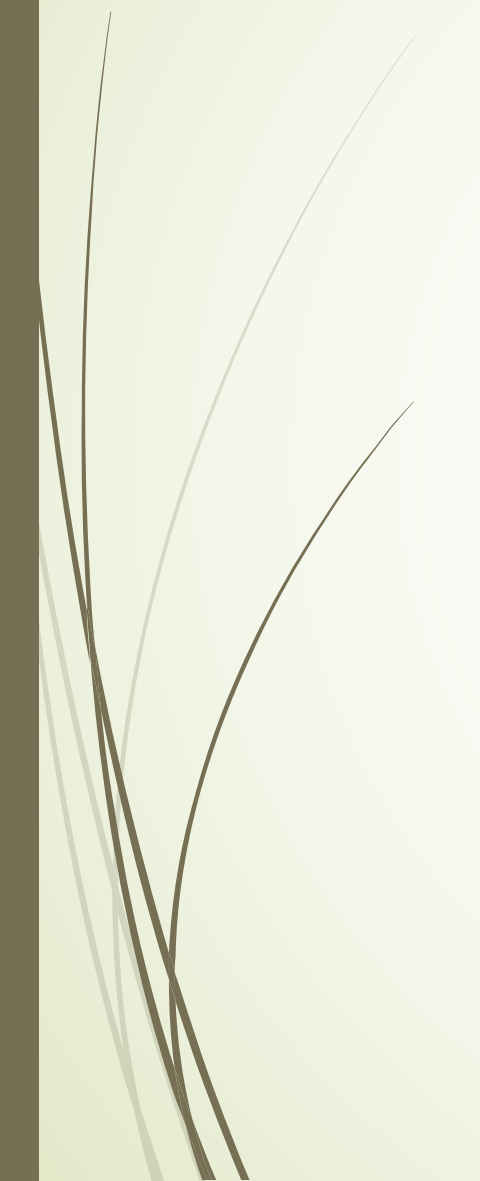


# Attending to Curiosities

- 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?

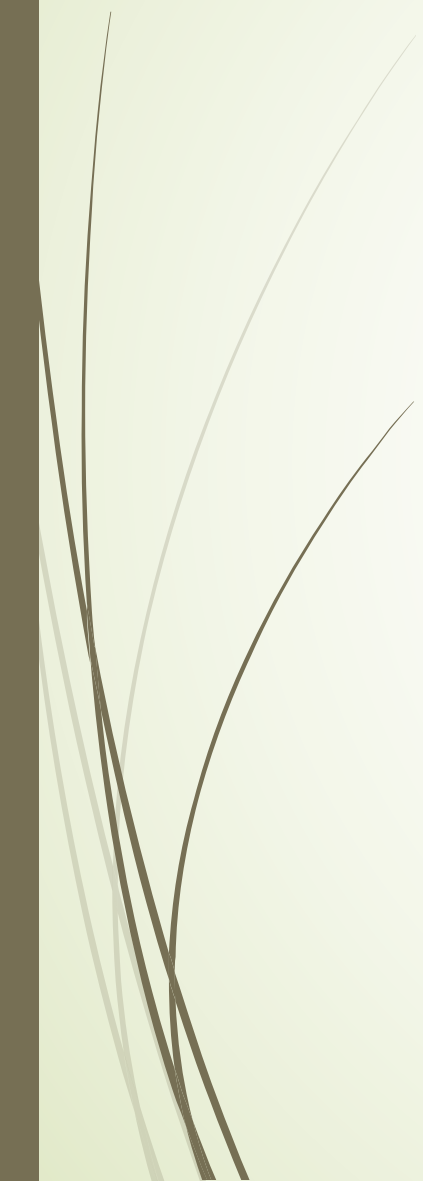


# Speculating

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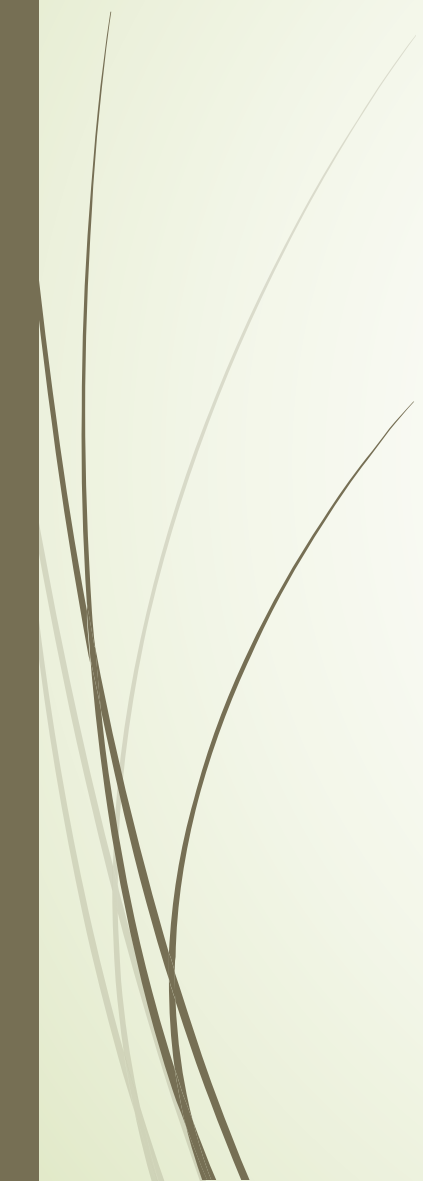


# Enlisting Partners

- 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

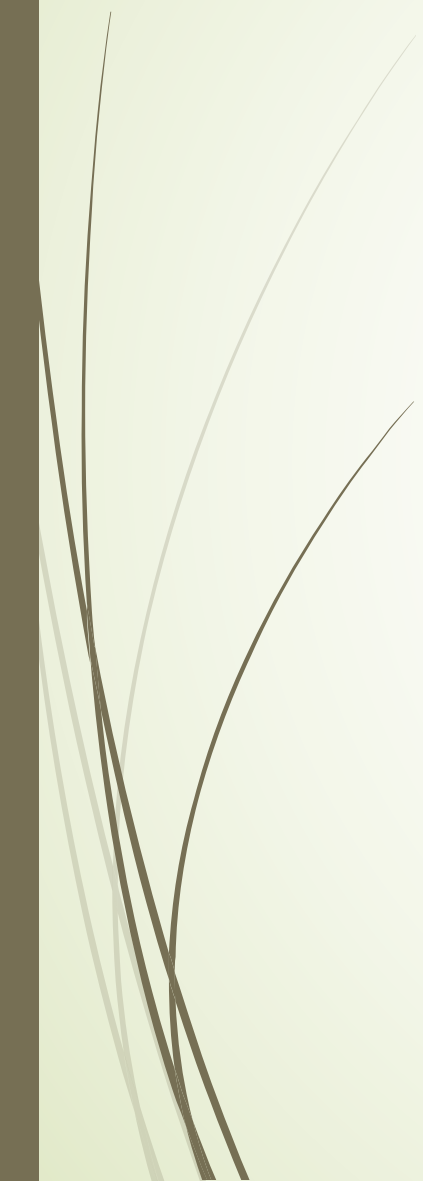
- Conversing with clients and colleagues
  - Reflecting on your own thoughts/experiences
  - Noticing effects and patterns
  - Seeking variety/diversity
- 

# 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?

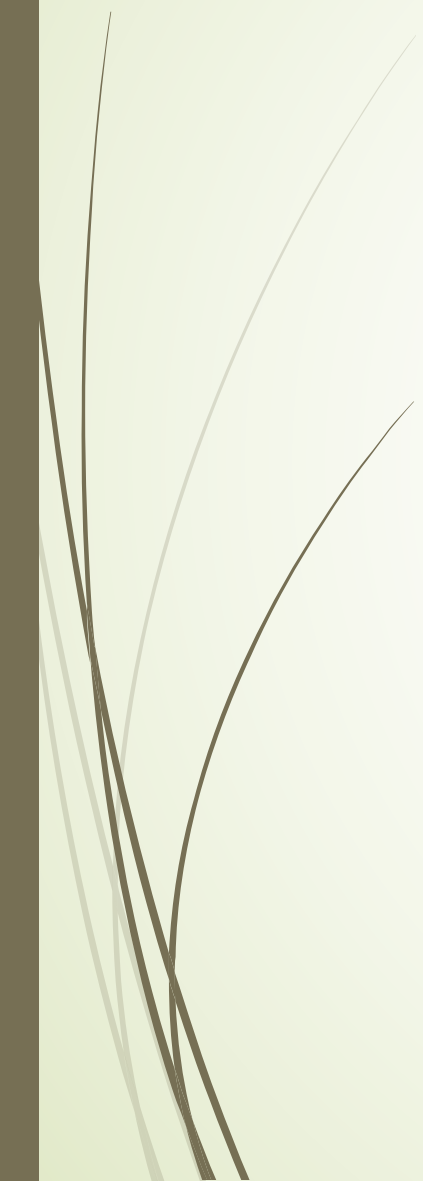


# Administration and Leadership

- 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?
- 



# Policy



- 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 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



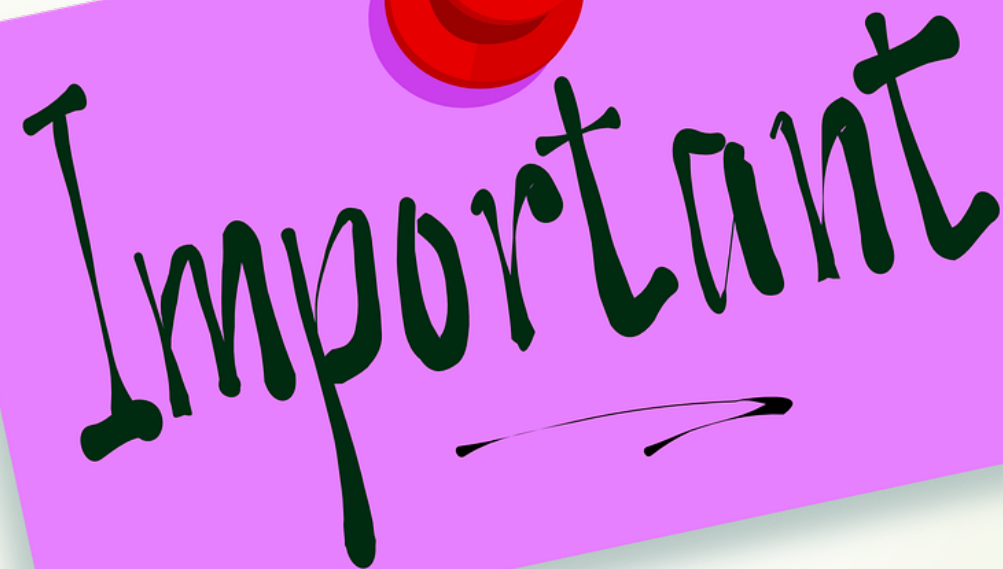

# Transdisciplinary





# Action-oriented

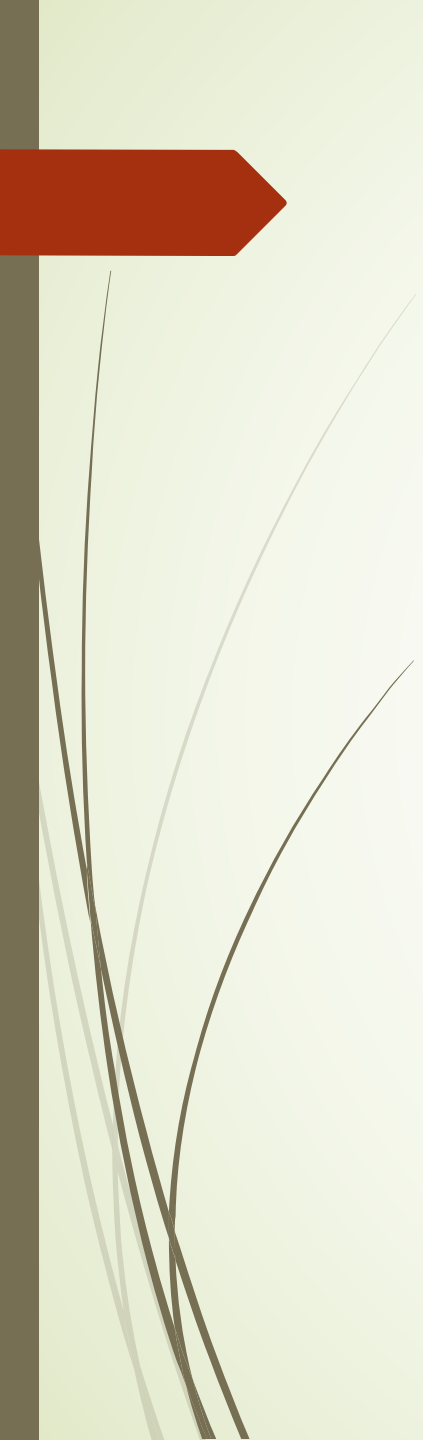





Important




Involving inquiry  
that is respectful of  
**practitioners' time.**



Includes an entire **cohort** of agency practitioners (and their clients).

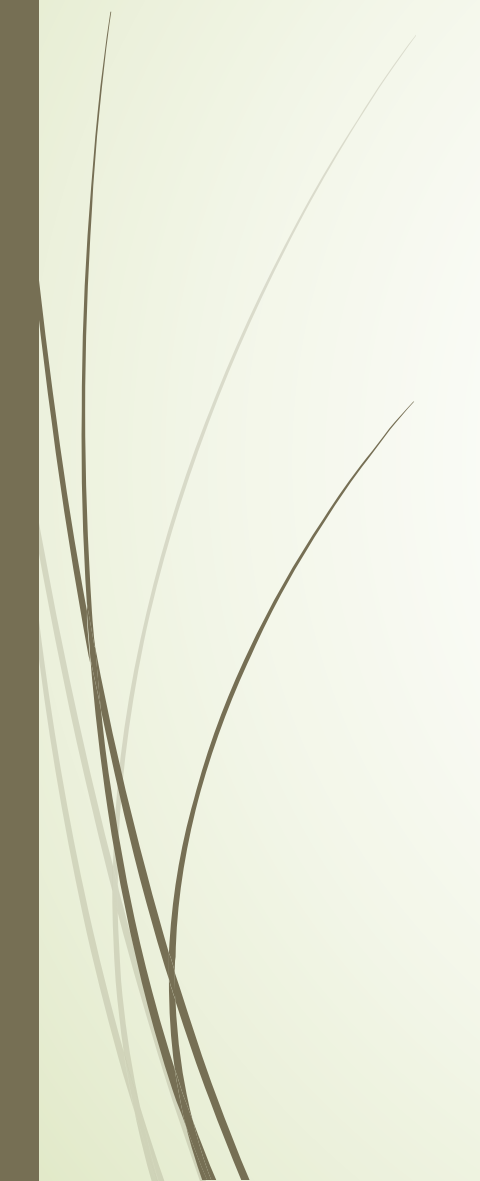



Uses research  
methodologies  
that are **coherent**  
with the practices  
being addressed.




**Immediate uses** of  
still-evolving  
knowledge in the  
practice context.

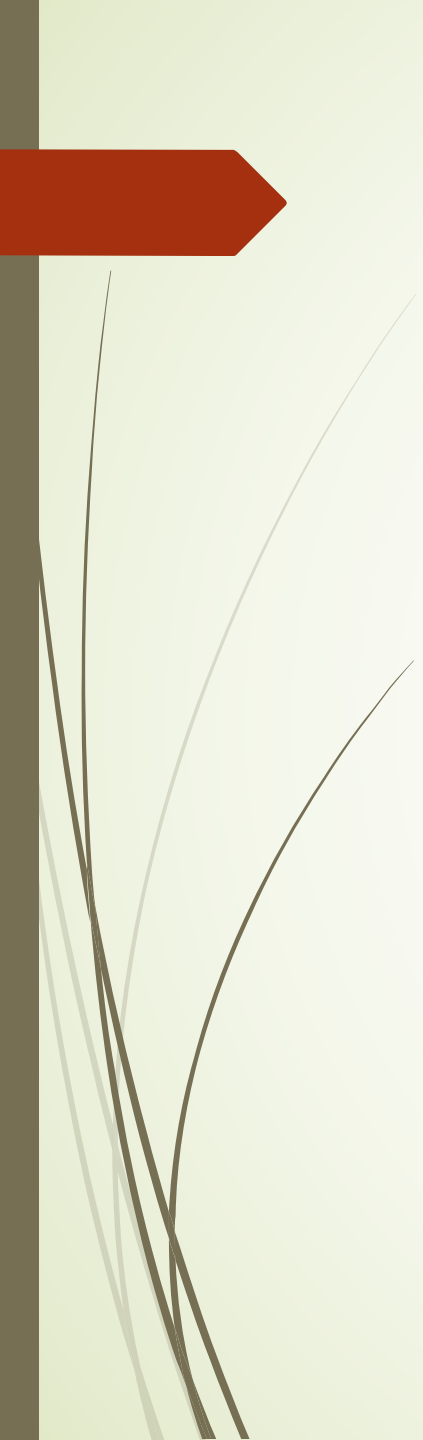




**Honoring**  
practitioners'  
abilities to examine  
their own  
practices.



**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

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Reynolds, V. (2012, June). An ethic of justice doing. Keynote at the *Conversations on the Margins: Therapeutic Change, Social Change, Social Justice Conference*, Ottawa, ON.

Wulff, D. (2008). "Research/Therapy": Review of Adele Clarke's *Situational Analysis: Grounded Theory After the Postmodern Turn*. *The Weekly Qualitative Report*, 1(6), 31-34.

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# Research As Daily Practice

## Book Chapters

- Wulff, D., & St. George, S. (2016). Researcher as practitioner: Practitioner as researcher. In S. St. George & D. Wulff (Eds.), *Family therapy as socially transformative practice: Practical strategies* (AFTA SpringerBriefs in Family Therapy) (pp. 25-40). Springer International.
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# Articles

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# 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

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

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

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For more information  
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