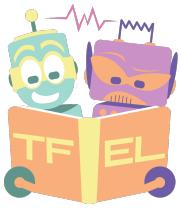

Transforming the Field Education Landscape

Research as Daily Practice: A Review of the Literature

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Transforming the Field Education Landscape (TFEL) project, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada's (SSHRC) partnership grant program, aims to better prepare the next generation of social workers in Canada by creating training and mentoring opportunities for students, developing, and mobilizing innovative and promising field education practices, and improving the integration of research and practice in field education.

For many years, practitioners and researchers in many fields have viewed the relationship between practice and research as unbalanced and tenuous. Despite calls and initiatives to strengthen the relationship, practice and research continue their rather separate existences in the academy and a variety of disciplinary practices. There have been many efforts to connect them in ways that validate their collective importance to produce useful and meaningful change in the world. In this paper, we review a sampling of these initiatives from various fields in order to ground our work (that we term "Research As Daily Practice") within this collection of practice and research integrative efforts. Here, we present a literature review of projects and efforts aimed at lessening or bridging the gap between professional practice and professional research to show where in this world of knowledge our idea of Research As Daily Practice fits.

Keywords: Practice-led research; practice-based evidence; action research; reflection-in-action

Research As Daily Practice

Research As Daily Practice is the name we have given to our ongoing efforts to bring clinicians closer to research by having our daily practice processes recognized as research in order to acknowledge their generation of daily and local knowledge (St. George, 2014; St. George & Wulff, 2014; St. George et al., 2015a, 2015b, 2015c; Wulff & St. George, 2014, 2016, 2020 (forthcoming)). Through this approach, we consider practice actions and research actions as essentially the same process but languaged differently within each initiative (e.g., assessment in clinical practice and data gathering in research, creating interventions from the assessment in clinical practice and transforming data through analysis in research). By minimizing these distinctions between clinical practice and research we have been able to show that practitioners are, through their daily practices, utilizing elements of inquiry that produce knowledge and action that are contextually and immediately usable. Embedded in the ways they "do" practice are the components of what we think of as "research."

Lauren has a PhD in Population and Public Health, is involved in various research projects at the University of Calgary, and serves as a member of the Health Research Ethics Board of Alberta Cancer Committee (HREBA-CC). She has also recently completed a Master's of Social Work and is a budding family therapist, working as an intern at the Calgary Family Therapy Centre for the past 10 months. Sally and Dan are both family therapy clinicians and supervisors, and professors in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary and have been working at integrating practice and research, social work and family therapy, teaching/supervising and learning in order to more effectively conduct and improve their own daily work.

Literature Review Parameters

Given that our initial search directly referencing the term, Research As Daily Practice, only produced writings by Sally and Dan (they coined the term), we turned to other descriptors for working at the intersection of practice and research. We scoured scholarly, peer-reviewed sources and utilized the Web of Science and SCOPUS databases, as well as specific searches on EBSCOhost, ProQuest,

and University of Calgary Library Social Work and Psychology databases with the search terms, *community practice*, *practice-based*, *research**[1], *collective learning*, *praxis*, *collaborative practice*, *action research*, *workplace*, *practice*, *evidence-based practice*, *evidence-informed practice*, *evidence-based research*, *evidence-informed research*, *research-based practice,* and *practice-led research*. To extend our reach, we added more specific search terms including *getting research into practice*, *research as daily practice*, *culture of research,* and *workplace practice research*, while eliminating the search terms, *collaborative practice*, *culture of research,* and *community practice* because using these terms elicited a host of literature results that were consistently missing a focus on practice in combination with research and were returning search results that were too broad or unrelated to our specific topic. As a result of brainstorming areas related broadly or loosely, we agreed to add the following search terms: *appreciative inquiry*, *local knowledge*, *co-production*, *co-research*, *solution-focused practice-research*, *reflex**, and *reflect**, and *knowledge translation*.

Through discussions among the three of us, we agreed on the following inclusion criteria:

- Explicit attention to research and practice;
- Use of the terms "evidence-based practice" or "practice-based evidence";
- Attention to praxis or theory-in-action;
- Attention to local knowledge and everyday life experiences as connected to research;
- Use of the terms participatory research, co-research, collaborative research, or action research.

These criteria were chosen because they represent common descriptors of practice-research intersections.

Lauren reviewed a total of 146 abstracts for peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and dissertations, and rejected 93 due to lack of relevance to the topic. After reading the material in full, she rejected 33 of the remaining 53 articles, chapters, and dissertations, for lack of good fit with our

[1] The "*" denotes a search mechanism that allows for all variations of suffixes with the root word.

literature review goals. In persisting with the search, Lauren tracked an additional 122 written and online sources from the reference lists in the 20 documents examined. Of the additional 122 sources, Lauren rejected 89 due to the lack of good fit, read in entirety the remaining 33 resources and removed an additional 7 due to lack of fit with our aims. Therefore, in this literature review we report on 46 separate materials that we have carefully examined. In the writing of this literature review, a few others sources emerged and they were also included.

Practice-Research: Shifting the Spotlight

Our focus on connections between practice and research led us to writings from a variety of fields: mental health, counseling/therapy, applied sciences, rehabilitation sciences, business and management, action research, health sciences, physical therapy, behavioural sciences, linguistics, education, journalism, textiles, transdisciplinary practice, public service and policy development, and international practice development. Common across this literature included a recognition that the gap between practice and research is problematic when facing immediate challenges in practice contexts (Hanks, 2019; Kim, 2020; Parkhurst et al., 2010; Splitter & Seidl, 2011). When research is utilized as a resource in practice, it is usually applied "after the fact" (Parkhurst et al., 2011; Splitter & Seidl, 2011; Thompson, 1996) often to evaluate how well an intervention worked.

Expanding this further, we noted language distinctions in the literature between "evidence-based practice" and "practice-based evidence" with each signaling a slightly different relationship between research and practice. Both of these terms focus on connections between research and practice, with evidence-based practice embracing research results that inform practice (more pronounced in the literature) and practice-based evidence leaning more toward valuing evidence that emanates from the practice experience (Barkham et al., 2010; van Hennik, 2020; van Hennik & Hillewaere, 2107).

Terms used to describe the practice-research intersections vary from author to author. Common examples of terms used include "practice-based research," "practice-led research," practice as research,

collaborative inquiry, generative research, and artistic research. So while there is significant writing about how practice and research can have common cause, the ways in which they can actually work together are highly divergent, ranging from very loosely connected to very closely connected. Our Research As Daily Practice position on the practice-research continuum is on the "very close" end where there is no real distinction between the two. In seeing the close connections between practice and research, our intent is to privilege the advantages and possibilities that accrue for practitioners. There could also be some benefits for researchers to see their work as a form of practice, but for this literature review, we are attending to the possibilities that emerge for practitioners when practice and research become connected to some degree. We found three primary arenas in the literature where practice and research is being discussed: clinical practice, arts/performance, and action research.

Clinical Practice

For many years clinical practitioners have been developing ways to merge practice and research for the benefit of clients and client outcomes within their disciplinary practice. Most of the literature we examined emphasizes how and when practitioners can best implement research findings into their practices. For example, van Hennik (2020) uses a variety of quantitative and qualitative research processes and instruments in his conversations with his clients, in effect framing family therapy practice as a form of doing research together.

Epston (1999) also emphasized doing research together by utilizing a "co-research metaphor" (p. 141) in his clinical practice because it "brought together the very respectable notion of research with the rather odd idea of the co-production of knowledge by sufferers and therapist" (pp. 141-142). Concerned with expert knowledge in clinical work holding too much authority, he and his co-researchers developed "practices to discover a 'knowing' in such a fashion that all parties to it could make good use of it. Such knowledges are fiercely and unashamedly pragmatic" (p. 142).

Within her form of collaborative therapy, Anderson (2007) refers to the therapist and client being engaged in a "mutual or shared inquiry about the issues or tasks at hand" (p. 47). Therapy is

conceptualized and languaged as a joint process of discovery—a collaborative inquiry project aiming to address client distress. The emphasis here is on dialogue and an approach to conversation in which participants jointly "investigate the problem at hand" through sharing questions, impressions, connections, and wonderings rather than through a pre-designed established protocol.

> Though what is it that they are researching? Interestingly, we could consider that the entire consultation is a process of research the topic of inquiry: that is, the reason for the client seeking consultation. Likewise, we could consider that client and practitioner are researching the usefulness of the consultation and determining its future direction. (Anderson, 2014, p. 70)

Looking at what appears to be very different types of work, qualitative research and therapy, Da Haene (2010) examined the "core features of postmodern ethnographic research and collaborative therapy and showed the profound convergence of these practices" (p. 8) centering on a "double transformative goal and similar concept of change" (p. 8). It is in a non-hierarchical, bilateral, and engaged conversation that new meanings are brought forth, exactly "the focal point where the distinction between research and therapy dissolves" (p. 8).

Additionally, in the domain of counseling, McLeod (2001) pointed out that "really significant periods within the evolution of counselling and psychotherapy, when new approaches have emerged, have been characterised by a close relationship between research and practice" (p. 3). Clinical case studies were employed as a method of inquiry in the development of psychoanalysis. Rogerian client-centered therapy began with "extensive collaboration between clinicians, researchers, and theoreticians, who identified, defined, measured and tested the elements of client-centered theory" (p. 4). Similarly, the emergence of CBT is credited to researching the core principles as seen in the practice context.

Some insights from medical education and practice provided additional perspectives on incorporating research findings into clinical practice (Donald & Milne, 2004). Donald and Milne suggested that dissemination and implementation of research findings into practice requires "detailed

understanding of the needs and environment of the practitioners in question" (p. 102) along with the active participation of the practitioners themselves in dissemination, enlisting involvement of other stakeholders, and valuing integration of local knowledge. In this way, the practitioner shapes the use of research findings to be helpful and relevant. van der Donk and Kuijer-Siebelink (2015) state that "practitioner research can therefore contribute to practice development by making tacit knowledge explicit" (p. 13), which supports the importance of incorporating research from experiences in the clinic back into meaningful and productive practice.

In all these examples, practice and research are considered to be valued partners for the betterment of practice. Despite many ways of connecting, the practice and research relationship is considered essential: "They are an inseparable team and neither element is complete on its own" (Swisher, 2010, p. 4).

Arts/Performance

In the arts literature, there seems to be a developing courtship between research and practice that has developed over many years. Along the practice-research continuum, the arts and performance disciplines seem rooted much more toward the practitioner end and is presented under a variety of names.

Practice-led Research

Gray (1996) works in the visual arts and describes "practice-led" research as "research initiated in practice and carried out through practice" (p. 1). She makes the case for this form of research to be considered legitimate in doctoral programs in the visual arts, arguing that the practice of creating artworks is itself inquiry. By "practice-led" she means

> firstly, research which is initiated in practice, where questions, problems, and challenges are identified and formed by the needs of practice and practitioners; and secondly, that the research strategy is carried out through practice, using predominantly methodologies and special methods familiar to us as practitioners in the visual arts. (p. 3)

While expressly working within the arts, there are ample points of connection with other fields of professional practice. She highlights how research and practice can be closely aligned with each other and takes another step by stating,

> Perhaps separation is futile, as what we are trying to do is integrate and synthesise the best aspects of each into a critical dialogue, which needs two elements to create it: practice-led research is simultaneously generative and reflective. (p. 10)

Candy (2006) also used the term, "practice-led research," to refer to research that "includes practice as an integral part of its method and often falls within the general area of action research" (p. 1). She writes in the field of creative practitioners (artists, writers, musicians, etc.) acknowledging that "searching for new understandings and seeking out new techniques for realizing ideas is a substantial part of everyday practice" (p. 2).

Performative Research

Another description of a relationship between practice and research is termed "performative research" (Haseman, 2006, p. 98):

> Performative research represents a move which holds that practice is the principal research activity—rather than *only* the practice of performance—and sees the material outcomes of practice as all important representations of research findings in their own right. (p. 103)

There is a pronounced creative component that encourages research initiatives to not only focus on "problems" but also what Haseman calls "an enthusiasm of practice—something which is exciting, something which may be unruly, or indeed something which may be just becoming possible." (p. 100). "Performative researchers are inventing their own methods to probe the phenomena of practice" (pp. 104-105).

Bricolage

Coming at this a little differently, Stewart (2010) writes about practitioner-based research using the metaphor of "bricolage" to describe what she refers to as "hybrid praxis" (p. 128).

> Through my teaching, I approach practitioner-based research as a way of working, investigating, and theorizing what it is to practice in the studio as researcher. . . . In this process, my classroom has become synonymous with my studio, functioning as a laboratory for research. (pp. 125-126)

There is a melding of theory, practice, and research. The context of teaching within the studio and the classroom provides the opportunity to blur the traditional distinctions of these three initiatives. Her aim is to

> bring together practice and research as purposeful practice. This is to do with creating intentional meaning through a process of rigorous planning, documentation, interpretation, analysis and storying. These processes are underpinned by constant emphasis on the ongoing and critical dialogues between studio and theory, process and product that are crucial for practitioner-based research. Emphasised is the rigour and discipline of creating art, and the imagination, skill and foresight that enrich the research of the bricoleur. (p. 128)

The inclusion of theory in the connections between practice and research further extends the blurring of boundaries of professional worlds, supporting a more integrated conceptualization of action-in-the-world. This stands in distinct counterpoint to modern tendencies to develop specializations.

Practice-as-Research

Kershaw et al. (2011) use the term "practice as research" (PaR) to indicate "the uses of practical creative processes as research methods (and methodologies) in their own right" (p. 64). Like Stewart (2010), Kershaw et al. describe practice-as-research as a hybrid of inquiries that combines "creative doing with reflexive being," which encourages "critical interactions between current epistemologies and ontologies" (p. 64). Kershaw et al. see their projects "spring from the passions and interests of hands-on creative researchers" (p. 64) with an emphasis on not over-specifying what such projects should look like. As part of the "practice turn" taken up by many fields and disciplines, Kershaw et al. embrace a "post-binary commitment to activity (rather than structure), process (rather

than fixity), action (rather than representation), collectiveness (rather than individualism), reflexivity (rather than self-consciousness), and more" (pp. 63-64). They emphasize the importance of maintaining the freedom of movement of artistic practice/performance from the structured forms of method. In their view practice provides an important counterbalance to the notion of structure that oftentimes accompanies research interests.

Action Research

Action research "seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people" and communities (Reason & Bradbury, 2006, p. 1). "Action" refers to practice or performance and is placed within "a cycle of having an idea, exploring the idea, planning an action, taking action, evaluating the action, amending the plan and so on" (Chard, 2014, p. 46). This iterative and reflexive process describes how action (practice) influences research (evaluation) and how that research impacts the next round of action.

Action research may be defined as an "orientation to knowledge creation that arises in a context of practice and requires researchers to work with practitioners," in which the purpose is two-fold in nature: to understand specific phenomena or "social arrangements" and to "effect desired change as a path to generating knowledge and empowering stakeholders" (Huang, 2010, p. 93) and thus changing usual practices, which produces more information for examination and trial.

Themes

In reading the literature we spotlighted connections between practice and research by identifying elements or themes that were shared. The themes we present are reflexive, generative, local and daily, participatory, transdisciplinary, action-oriented.

Reflexive

Reflexive is a term frequently used to describe projects or initiatives that incorporate research into practice and practice into research (Hanks, 2019; Jensen & Kainz, 2019; St. George et al., 2015b;

Wulff & St. George, 2016). Reflexivity describes a process whereby the practitioner-researcher considers implications of what they have been experiencing and learning for the wider context within which they work. We deliberate on the context and on what is implicit in our actions. Hosking and Pluut (2010) explain that ongoing dialoguing is a key construct of reflexivity. By adopting reflexive practices in examining the research process, the traditional "expert" role of the researcher is "unpacked" and critiqued for its use of power and an invitation for others, such as practitioners, to share their expertise in the process of research more democratically can be considered (Hanks, 2019; Hosking & Pluut, 2010; Jensen & Kainz, 2019).

Furthermore, reflexivity is a key component when examining systemic therapeutic practice (Rhodes et al., 2011). This promotes the practitioners' ability to see how theorizing, researching, and practicing are located within social, cultural, and historical contexts. Reflexive responses could be understood as "reflections-in-action" (Schön, 1983). They become the "what we do" with what we see. Reflexive thinking is a fundamental part of what all the authors we have referred to have done to produce the connections/intersections between practice and research that they present. It is the process they use in order to see new possibilities in how they engage in their professional activities.

Generative

Generative is a term that refers to the creation of something new and fresh and as such it cuts across research and practice quite easily. Schnitman (2008), for example, identifies generative inquiry as a process of "dialogic creation" (p. 73) and through collaborative co-participation, new meanings are brought into life. In the context of therapy, generative inquiry is facilitated by the therapist who facilitates using language that "inspires people to find new descriptions, transform relationships and help themselves and others cope with difficult or problematic circumstances," where the extant and emergent are "springboards for expanding possibilities" (Schnitman, 2008, p. 74). Similarly, other literature suggests that generative inquiry also resides in the realm of research (Hosking & Pluut, 2010), intent on producing something new; and yet still other authors categorize generative inquiry as a

function of initiatives blending practice and research (Stewart, 2010). The generative inquiry literature offers an opportunity for research and practice to coalesce in what Schnitman (2008) describes as "generative spirals" (p. 74) for new knowledge development and what Stewart (2010) refers to as a process employed by the practitioner researcher in which they take a "central place in seeking to uncover, record, interpret and position, from an insider's perspective and experience, the processes they use within the context of professional contemporary practices in the field" (p. 126).

Harlene Anderson (2014) highlights how her "collaborative-dialogue approach to research becomes more prospective than retrospective. . . . The process . . . becomes a springboard for the many other possibilities that can emerge in the outside-the-consultation-life of each participant" (p. 71). Rather than recapturing or recasting past events in the life of the client, this practice approach to research emphasizes what is to come next, anticipating going forward.

In the forward-thinking spirit of the writers who are working diligently and creatively to merge practice and research, we could borrow a term from health disciplines, salutogenic, that improvements in practices derive from applying research ideas into daily practices (Hansson & Cederblad, 2004; Mittlemark & Bauer, 2017). Salutogenesis refers to the idea that "life experiences help shape one's sense of coherence," which in turn "helps one mobilise resources to cope with stressors and manage tension" and determines one's movement on the continuum of wellness or disease (Mittelmark & Bauer, 2017, p. 7). Hansson and Cederblad (2004) extend salutogenesis into the realm of family therapy by emphasizing resources and possibilities rather than focusing on the problems.

Local and Daily

While Brennen and Gustche (2019) from the field of journalism identify a disconnect between research and daily life in the community, they also invite readers to consider the importance of the "everyday" in building relevance in any field or discipline. The further that inquiry and practices distance themselves from the local and the immediate, the greater risk to misunderstanding the lived

experience of persons and to be unable to offer relevant assistance. Qualitative research uses this idea to privilege the local more than the generalizable.

> In writings that compare qualitative research and journalism, Willey (2004), explains reporters and editors decide on the research questions or story project; they identify the best methods to use to obtain the information they are seeking; they identify the population needed for participation; and they create the group and proceed with the research, data analysis and the writing of the news story or series. (p. 83)

In the practice field of journalism, the key elements that we associate with research are embedded within their everyday practices of producing news articles or reports.

McNamee (2014) challenges the idea that practitioners are not researchers and asserts that any practitioner can "recognize his or her practice as a legitimate and potentially useful research project" (p. 89). The immediacy of experience for practitioners positions them perfectly to pursue understanding and action in the everyday world where they work.

Tafoya (1989) offers reflections on storytelling as an examination of daily life. To tell a story requires examining aspects of our world/experience and then to present that experience in a coherent way to impact an audience. Tafoya describes storytelling as a key mechanism that is used by First Nations peoples to conceptualize "relationships, responsibilities, learning and teaching" (p. 72). By examining everyday life through storytelling-based inquiry, Tafoya connects the importance of the daily to inquiry within the context of practice.

Daily life research methodologies have been gaining traction as a complementary tool to traditional research methods that capture life and all its daily processes in their natural contexts (Reis, 2012). Daily life methodologies offer a sort of "ecological validity" (p. 4) that other research approaches may not by allowing for examination of "the nature and repercussions of [life] events that cannot ethically or pragmatically be studied in the laboratory, such as health crises or abusive behaviour in families" (Reis, 2012, p. 8). Reis defines ecological validity as "whether a study

accurately represents the typical conditions under which that effect occurs in the real world" (p. 6), an effort to ensure that we study real-world events or relationships.

Participatory

Qualitative research has much in common with collaborative forms of therapy (De Haene, 2010). Given the participatory nature of qualitative research, "the distinction between researcher and subjects gets blurred: all are participants in their mutual involvement and joint search for understanding and meaning through dialogue" (De Haene, p. 6). Collaborative therapeutic practices are also described as "shared inquiry and participatory dialogue" (p. 8). This form of practice and this form of research connect with each other through "the postmodern meaning of . . . inquiry itself: not an objectifying description mapping a reality of convergences, but an inventive language practice, an invitation into dialogue on convergences" (p. 9). It is from a postmodern perspective that research and practice can find common ground and purpose. From this position, those who engage in practice-research value participation over specific material outcomes. Participation may be considered an end in itself.

Some examples of studies in which the researchers incorporated a participatory approach to research included the following. Coppola (2016) invited participants to join him in a series of workshops on self-care and as he utilized three methodologies to collect and analyze data, he made revisions to the daily self-care practices by researcher and participants journeying together toward practice change. Hanks (2019) examined how learners and teachers working together as co-researchers can integrate research and pedagogy through the process of exploratory practice. Jensen and Kainz (2019) proposed engaged scholarship as a method of co-creating and implementing new knowledge centered on identifying and addressing social/community problems through research "mechanisms" such as participatory action research, translational research, and practice-based research. Litchfield (1999) utilized a praxis framework where she as a practitioner in nursing studied how praxis can illustrate the "merging of theory, practice and research as practice wisdom" (p. 62). Sprecher (2011)

offered an analysis of theoretical frameworks of pedagogy through the lens of bricolage, which identifies ways that teacher-researchers learn about and respond to their students.

Transdisciplinary

Transdisciplinarity is an approach that seeks to address challenges that characterize traditional research approaches, which include deficiencies related to research integration, translation, and implementation of research findings and participatory processes (Gibbs et al., 2018). Gibbs et al. (2018) explain that transdisciplinarity processes help practitioner-researchers to reduce or eliminate the gap between research and practice by integrating knowledge across disciplines and social contexts. By considering social context, transdisciplinary theory and research afford us the ability to address complex societal problems of the everyday in a way that applies research from myriad disciplines in tangible and practical ways (Gibbs et al., 2018). Gibbs et al. (2018) identify how transdisciplinarity contributes to the adoption of collaborative research in the practice of various disciplines.

du Plessis et al. (2014) embrace transdisciplinarity as a guide for "collective intellectual ideas and action based research inputs toward practical outcomes—thereby bridging the gap between knowledge production, policy and application" (p. 17). They hold a recognition that individual disciplinary efforts can be enhanced by a "cross-fertilisation of experience and skills" (p. 18) that can lead to a "practical unity of action" (p. 18). Using metaphors, Choi and Pak (2006) characterize the contribution of transdisciplinary work via comparisons with multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary initiatives: multidisciplinary is additive, 2+2=4 (salad bowl metaphor); interdisciplinary is more than the sum of the parts, 2+2=5 (melting pot metaphor); and transdisciplinary goes beyond disciplines, 2+2=yellow (cake metaphor).

According to duPlessis et al. (2014),

> Transdisciplinarity is seen as a framework of collaboration across disciplines guided by an all-embracing conceptual agreement and combining the inputs of various knowledge sectors be

> they scientist or non-scientist, communities of academies, oral and written narratives, and student or mentor (pp. 19, 21).

Practice and research could be understood to represent different "disciplines" of fields of endeavor, thus being a site where a "framework of collaboration" could have beneficial results.

Action-Oriented

One of the driving forces in merging practice and research is to further constructive action our worlds. The history of moving knowledge into action or practice is often touted as the key step in research initiatives (Thirsk, 2018); however, the process often breaks down and practice sticks with existing knowledge (Azimi et al., 2015). For this reason there is a long-standing assumption in social work education specifically that research is not relevant in daily social work practice (Harrison & Thyer, 1988). Therefore, it is incumbent on practitioners and researchers, and even more so, researcher-practitioners, to develop initiatives that reduce barriers in the uptake of research into practice through collaborative practices and participatory approaches such as those previously mentioned.

By encouraging the crossovers between practice and research we create more opportunities for knowledge to find implementation. This fulfills the original hopes and expectations for why knowledge is desired in the first place and encourages the application of research into practice.

Appreciative Inquiry can be considered a form of action research, combining an interest in developing knowledge/understanding with doing something with it. "AI refers to both a search for knowledge and a theory of intentional collective action that are designed to help evolve the normative vision and will of a group, organization, or society as a whole" (Chenail et al., (2007) p. 450). AI expressly couples learning about what is going "right" with developing inertia in moving toward enhancing those actions. The ways this knowing comes about is embedded within the relationships of the "knowers," facilitating the developing of those good practices.

Some Comparisons Across the Literature and Research As Daily Practice

While we do not notice a one-to-one correspondence between Research As Daily Practice and what we have garnered from the literature, we do notice crossovers. For example, we think of Research as Daily Practice as future-oriented—to be future-oriented we have fully taken up *reflexive* processes to go forward in trying new actions or practices (on a very small scale like developing new questions for our clients or renaming a problem area to be more accurate and hope-filled) sometimes even before we have finished with an inquiry. The focus is on next steps—how we will go on. Understanding is wedded with action. What we learn from what we have done is parlayed into the next movement.

We have over time shifted from trying to appeal to the world of research to appealing to practitioners. Rather than seeking to make research endeavors more palatable for practitioners, we look for ways that practice endeavors provide guidance and possibilities for research initiatives. For example, instead of suggesting qualitative methodologies that seem very practice-friendly already and have credibility in the field, we have shifted to using methodologies that make the most sense given the practice context and those that are most familiar to practitioners. We are most appreciative of our arts colleagues who have given us the most solid of groundings to *start with practitioners and their practices*.

In using Research As Daily Practice we pride ourselves on not needing funding, extra personnel or extra time because we privilege the *local and the daily*. This is a very critical practical advantage for our merger of practice and research. Oftentimes the practicalities (time, money, resources) of conducting research and providing practice limits the possibilities of both. But merging them, new efficiencies are created that allows each to achieve more.

Transdisciplinary theory is another relevant approach to research that is described in the literature that illustrate some parallel processes to Research As Daily Practice. Research As Daily Practice seeks to do the same within the societal context of mental health and systemic family therapy practice. Like transdisciplinary theory and research approaches, Research As Daily Practice is a process rather than a method, which is also characterized by challenging traditional methods of

investigating, producing and disseminating research (du Plessis et al., 2014; St. George et al., 2015b). Transdisciplinary approaches and Research As Daily Practice incorporate knowledge of daily life into research and practice by removing the traditional academic requirement for *a priori* conditions in knowledge production and instead focuses on existing knowledge as an epistemological and ontological basis from which understanding, interpretation and application are mobilized (du Plessis et al., 2014). Other parallels between Research As Daily Practice and transdisciplinarity include the application of praxis, the iterative nature of examining and applying existing systems of knowledge, the incorporation of reflection as a key component in the development of ecological validity of knowledge, and the collaborative approach to knowledge development and generative inquiry (du Plessis et al., 2014; Gibbs et al., 2018; Hosking & Plutt, 2010; Reis, 2012; St. George et al., 2015b; Wulff et al., 2015). Particularly relevant to Research As Daily Practice is the transdisciplinary process of "bringing together researchers and (sometimes) professionals from diverse backgrounds to work on a common problem" (Neuhauser, 2018, p. 27). A notable difference is that although transdisciplinary processes "sometimes" include professionals, Research As Daily Practice enables practitioner/professional and researcher collaboration as a key component of the approach (Neuhauser, 2018, p. 27; St. George et al., 2015b). However, both research approaches are participatory in nature and seek to enable implementation of research-based knowledge into action (Neuhauser, 2018; St. George et al., 2015a, 2015b; Wulff & St. George, 2014).

Upon reviewing the literature and delineating the distinctions and commonalities found between action research and Research As Daily Practice, we could say that while Research as Daily Practice is its own distinct research process that is specific to the realm of clinical practice in mental health and family therapy, it likely falls under the umbrella of action science. Action science is an inquiry into societal practice, where the action scientist acts as an interventionist who promotes learning in the client system and contributes to general knowledge through the development of themes

that practitioners utilize to construct theories and methods applicable to their practice (Argyris et al., 1985; Friedman, 2006).

And finally, while anyone could conduct Research As Daily Practice as a solo activity, we find that the *participatory* aspect of Research As Daily Practice provides support and injects new ideas in ways that help the work to be sustainable. The *iterative* nature creates long-standing work partnerships and a flow of projects and initiatives.

Conclusions

Although the division between research and practice has lessened over the last three to four decades, disconnections remain (Gray, 1996; Reis, 2012; Stewart, 2010). Literature explaining why the separation between research and practice perpetuates frequently identifies an assumption that research requires practitioners to "set aside their embodied knowledge of practice and to produce radically different, objective and depersonalised forms of knowledge" (Bondi & Fewell, 2017, p. 113). Additionally, van Shaik (2019) argues that separation of research and practice has historically been embraced by academics and many practitioners. However, literature examining the importance of practice-based evidence, practice-led research and the practitioner researcher in various fields, including therapeutic practice suggests otherwise (Barkham et al., 2010; Gray, 1996; Haseman, 2006; Kim, 2020; Splitter & Seidl, 2011; Stewart, 2010; van Hennik 2020). Although gaps remain, literature published beginning in the mid-to-late 1990s supports the view that the proverbial research-practice pendulum is swinging back towards collaboration between research and practice, which is further evidenced in the development of processes such as Research As Daily Practice (Gray, 1996; Haseman, 2006; McLeod, 2001; Splitter & Seidl, 2011; St. George et al., 2015b). However, a gap remains, and it is incumbent on practitioners and researchers to be aware of said gap in order to reduce the associated barriers in uptake of research into practice and incorporation of practice-based evidence into research.

Our literature review into the intersections between practice and research has validated our beliefs in the utility and potentials of practice-research initiatives. We also have been encouraged to

continue our work to unite practice and research into one process. The “family” of practice-research perspectives (of which we are a member) is a large and growing collective, within which there is lots of room to locate oneself. This arena provides space for growth and innovation.

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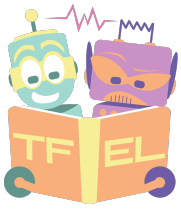

Transforming the Field Education Landscape