



Transforming the Field
Education Landscape

Innovative, Promising, & Wise Practices: Social Work Field Education in the Prairie Region

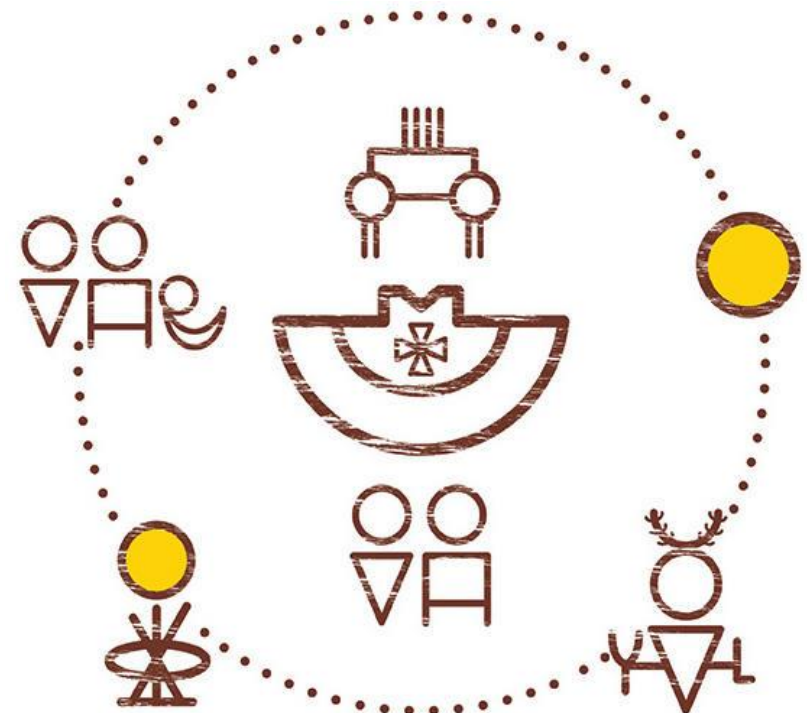
Presenters: Dr. Vibha Kaushik & Shannon Klassen

Discussants: Dr. Christine A. Walsh

March 18, 2022

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The University of Calgary respectfully acknowledges 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.



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University of Calgary Office of Indigenous Engagement



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CRSH  SSHRC

OUTLINE

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- Project overview
 - Background and context
 - Purpose of the study
 - Key terms
 - Data collection and analysis
 - Findings and key themes
 - Conclusion and implications
 - Moving forward
 - Discussion



BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

PROJECT OVERVIEW

TFEL is a partnership project that aims to prepare the next generation of social workers in Canada by creating training and mentoring opportunities for students, developing and mobilizing promising and wise field education practices, and improving the integration of research and practice in field education (TFEL, 2020).



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BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- In Canada, social work field education is in a state of crisis (Ayala et al., 2017; Bogo, 2015).
- Resource scarcity, financial cutbacks, and increasing student enrollment negatively impacting social service agencies and educational institutions (Ayala et al., 2017; Macdonald, 2013).
- COVID-19 has aggravated issues by limiting placement options, shifting social work to online delivery, lockdowns, and other disruptions education and services (Kourgiantakis et al., 2021).
- Field education is no longer sustainable and in desperate need of restructuring to address the current challenges while continuing to provide students with high quality field education experiences (TFEL, 2020).
- The crisis needs to be addressed before it negatively impacts the learning needs of students and the ability of the profession to deliver quality education and social services to local communities (TFEL, 2020).
- Literature advocates for integration of indigenous practices within field education (Clark & Drolet, 2014).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

- To identify innovative, promising, and wise practices that could assist in the development of sustainable models of field education in Canada.
- Focus of the webinar:
 - To report and discuss the findings of the interviews conducted in the Prairie region – Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.





KEY TERMS

INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

-
- Cutting edge practices that have the potential to enhance field education while addressing existing challenges.
 - New practices that have not yet been tested in some areas.
 - Show promise in their potential to enhance field education and address some of the challenges that exist.

PROMISING PRACTICES

-
- Approaches, interventions, programs, services, or strategies that show potential for enhancing field education.
 - May address specific challenges experienced in social work field education.
 - May be undergoing evaluation for effectiveness and replicability and have demonstrated the ability to achieve their stated aims.

WISE PRACTICES

-
- Indigenous-centered practices that are flexible, locally, and culturally relevant.
 - Respect all forms of understanding including lived experience, traditional knowledge, and the use of story.
 - Relational in nature and encourage mutual respect, inclusivity, and collectivity.



METHODOLOGY

DATA COLLECTION

- July – December 2020.
- 35 semi-structured interviews with field directors/ coordinators, faculty liaisons, field instructors, and field supervisors in Prairie region.
- Purposive and snowball sampling.
- Recruitment notice – TFEL newsletter, website, social media, and emails to TFEL members.
- Online interviews via Zoom or Microsoft Teams.
- 20 open-ended questions.
- \$20 Gift Cards.



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WE ARE RECRUITING SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS!

Field directors/coordinators, field instructors, faculty, and other social work practitioners working in the context of field education in Canada.

- 30 - 60 minute virtual interview
- Share your perspectives and experiences in supporting social work field education
- Identify promising and wise practices in social work field education

For more information, email:
[**tfelresearch@gmail.com**](mailto:tfelresearch@gmail.com)

This study has been approved by the University of
Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board
(REB19-0901)

TFEL is supported in part by funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada



DATA ANALYSIS

- Auto transcription using Zoom and Microsoft Teams.
- Transcripts reviewed and edited by research assistants, coded for thematic analysis (Fonteyn et al., 2008; MacQueen & McLellan, 1998).
- Team-based coding: Group and independent using Microsoft Word.
- Master codebook: Code names, definitions, and relevant quote.
- Codebook periodically reviewed.
- NVivo 12.0 used in the final stage.





FINDINGS

**WHAT WERE
THE MAIN
INNOVATIVE
PRACTICE
THEMES?**

Technology

Flexibility

Creativity

Macro-level Placements

Risk-Taking

MAIN THEMES: INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

Incorporating Technology

“Right now, we've actually seen things like Zoom [and] Microsoft Teams to be able to be the way that we connect right so? The students are really eager, and they're interested in that, and that's what we're here for is to help them achieve their learning goals.”

Increased Flexibility

“There may be [some] possibilities only available over summer months or even certain times of the year, but it's very intense, so maybe some flexibility for some students to do that too. If the placement wants to have it.”

WHAT WERE THE MAIN PROMISING PRACTICE THEMES?

Non-Traditional
Placement
Options

Atypical
Supervision
Strategies

Collaboration
with
Community

Open-
Mindedness

Group
Processing
Strategies

Non-Traditional Placement Options

“I think in terms of thinking outside the box or being creative and innovative in our field practicums there are opportunities to do more work with those agencies - in non-traditional social work agencies - where maybe they don't have on the ground social work supervision, but they are amazing opportunities for our students.”

Supervision Strategies

“We need to also expand our understandings of supervision and, what supervision looks like to include online e-supervision, group supervision.”

**MAIN THEMES:
PROMISING
PRACTICES**

**WHAT WERE
THE MAIN
WISE
PRACTICE
THEMES?**

Incorporating Indigenous Practices

Redefining Social Work Practice

Engaging Elders

Restructuring Learning Agreements

Perspective-Taking

MAIN THEMES: WISE PRACTICES

Incorporating Indigenous Practices

“The wise practices and looking at Indigenous ways and other ways of knowing, I think that there's areas that were not currently practicing, areas where we don't currently have placements and those are the areas that I see opportunities for us to look at what a student wants to learn and what their gifts are and their skills are, and how can we match this with what communities need.”

Redefining Clinical Practice

“We've also looked at being really creative, flexible and open minded about definitions of certain terms, such as like “clinical practice,” when we know [...] that's a very westernized notion, and that it might not be an appropriate one to apply in all contexts. And so, I think our main innovation around that has been trying to work with students who find our traditional way of doing things problematic. I think we would like to be able to do more in this way and to expand these notions and maybe sort of generalize this approach more.”

Effects on Field Education

“So, there's been a lot of missed time. And you know, students will read policy manuals only so much and the challenges is, you know, even if you were, if there was no COVID you would still attend to the policy and practice manuals, and especially I could see how [inaudible] agencies.

But you would be having discussions. You have a connection with somebody and now they're doing it at home. There's pieces missing. You've read it, but where does it go? How do you integrate that? That's why I always my fear.”

Opportunities Provided

“I think the current context is a challenging one. I think it was challenging before COVID. I think it's been made even more challenging since COVID. I think as a social worker now working remotely. That can be a challenge. But I also think it presents a new opportunity to kind of rethink why we're doing things. I think in moving in online spaces and supporting virtual practicums, it's an opportunity to think about what are the online skills that students also need to develop.”

**MAIN THEMES:
COVID-19**



CONCLUSION

IMPLICATIONS

-
- Urgent need for reevaluation of social work field education programs – conceptualization, structure, and delivery.
 - Need for innovation in social work field education for preparing the next generation of social workers.
 - New practices, insights and approaches to teaching and learning will allow social work education to evolve and thrive in increasingly demanding social, educational, and labor market contexts.

MOVING FORWARD: FOCUS GROUP ON TRANSFORMING FIELD EDUCATION

- Ongoing
- Actively recruiting in Atlantic, BC, Manitoba, Quebec, and Saskatchewan regions
- Goal: 120 participants
- Current status: 20 focus groups with 69 participants



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TRANSFORMING SOCIAL WORK FIELD EDUCATION IN CANADA

The purpose of the focus groups is to inform the development of sustainable models of social work field education by fostering discussion on transforming field education in Canada.

IF YOU ARE A SOCIAL WORK FIELD EDUCATION COORDINATOR AND/OR DIRECTOR, FIELD INSTRUCTOR, FACULTY MEMBER, OR FIELD EDUCATOR AND/OR ADMINISTRATOR, WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR THOUGHTS!

****FOCUS GROUPS WILL TAKE PLACE ONLINE DUE TO COVID-19**

YOU WILL RECEIVE A \$25 E-GIFT CARD FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, EMAIL
TFELPROJECT@UCALGARY.CA**

This study has been approved by the University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (REB19-0901)

SSHRC  CRSH  UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY



MOVING FORWARD



DISCUSSION

For more information
about the partnership please contact:
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