



Promising, wise, and innovative practices in field education: Study findings from the Transforming the Field Education Landscape (TFEL) partnership

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BACKGROUND

Field education is a vital component of social work education, providing students with valuable learning and the opportunity to develop their skills within the social work profession. Unfortunately, social work education programs are facing significant challenges. These challenges include: scarcity of practicum opportunities in organizations and government cutbacks in funding to agencies resulting in higher caseloads for the social workers who would typically provide field instruction to students (Bogo et al., 2020). In order to address this growing concern and fulfill the needs of students, it is essential to find promising, wise, and innovative approaches for field education.

GOAL

To identify promising, wise, and innovative practices that can inform the development of sustainable models of field education.

METHODOLOGY

Interviews on Promising, Innovative, and Wise Practices

- 104 semi-structured interviews across Canada
- Data collected in 2020-2021
- Coding & thematic analysis by region (BC, Prairie, Ontario, Quebec, Atlantic) and nationally in NVivo 12.0

Focus Groups on Transforming Field Education

- 31 focus groups conducted with 99 participants across Canada.
- Data collected in 2021-2022
- Participants were located in British Columbia (n=17), Alberta (n=32), Manitoba (n=1), Atlantic Canada (n=2), Ontario (n=39), and Quebec (n=8)
- Coding & thematic analysis in NVivo 12.0

Study Participants

- Study participants included field education coordinators and directors, field instructors, faculty liaisons, and field educators.

TFEL Roundtable Dialogue Series

- The Roundtables aim to facilitate dialogue on each practice with a presentation and roundtable discussion.
- Approximately 200 participants including students, social work practitioners, field instructors, faculty liaisons, and field educators have joined the Roundtables.
- Ongoing: Sept. 2022 to May 2023

INVENTORY ON PROMISING, WISE, INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

The study identified nine categories of Promising, Wise, Innovative practices in social work field education, based on interviews and focus groups conducted with field education coordinators and directors, field instructors, faculty liaisons, and field educators. The research findings were drawn from data collected from 104 interviews and 31 focus groups with 99 participants virtually across Canada.

1. **Facilitating multiple partnerships and collaborations**
2. **Creating new and innovative field placements**
3. **Sharing unique practices for field supervision**
4. **Accreditation and policy**
5. **Valuing open-mindedness and flexibility in practicum placements**
6. **Using technology in field education**
7. **Macro-level placements**
8. **Incorporating Indigenous & wise practices**
9. **Equity, diversity & inclusion**

LITERATURE

- ❑ Field education is an integral aspect of social work education that provides students with direct practice experience and enhances their ability to integrate social work theory, research, and knowledge into direct practice (Ayala et al., 2017; Bogo, 2015).
- ❑ Social work programs have been contending with resource scarcity and financial cutbacks that when paired with increasing student enrollment are negatively impacting both social service agencies and educational institutions (Ayala et al., 2017; Macdonald, 2013).
- ❑ Ultimately, the current 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 in local communities (TFEL, 2020).

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

- ❑ Promising, wise and innovative practices identified in this research can be adapted to make field education more dynamic and to inform the development of sustainable models of field education.

LIMITATIONS

- ❑ Most of the focus group participants (71 out of 99) were located in Ontario and Alberta, only one participant was from Manitoba and two were from Atlantic Canada. Findings; therefore, may have not sufficiently included diverse regional perspectives.

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