



UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

FACTOR-INWENTASH
FACULTY OF SOCIAL WORK

Becoming Educators

A workshop for our future field instructors

“Students make us come alive, and they hold us accountable. It is prestigious to be a field instructor. Sometimes they even give us gifts and feed us! Students give us a different perspective, they say something different....They keep us fresh and client-focused.”

Emeline Homonoff, 2008

February 5, 2016

Table of Contents

Welcome	2
Agenda	3
Keynote	4
Biography of Keynote Speaker	4
Biographies of Seminar Presenter, Panel Moderator, Interviewer, and Closing Commenter	5
Biographies of Aspiring Field Instructor, Panelists, and Video Contributor	6
Seminar Notes	8

Welcome!

The development of competence in the professional practice of social work is a primary objective of all social work programs. Field education offers students learning opportunities through which knowledge can be integrated and applied to practice, and competence in practice skills can be developed. Indeed, it has been identified as **the** most significant component of the social work curriculum in preparing competent, effective, and ethical social workers (Bogo 2015).

Field representatives, students, new graduates and the FIFSW Practicum Office have collaborated to design this interactive workshop designed for YOU - future social workers and future field instructors. The intent is to introduce you to the pivotal role of being a social work field instructor. Your current field instructor as well as your Faculty-Field Liaison, are sources of information about field instruction. This workshop will enable you to hear from faculty, a new graduate as well as other field instructors for their perspective as well as give you the opportunity to ask your questions.

This workshop was designed particularly for you, at this critical time in your professional development. We hope that you enjoy the activities, are inspired by the speakers, and commit to being the social work educators of tomorrow.

Agenda

11:15 a.m.	Keynote	Marion Bogo
11:30 a.m.	Interactive Seminar	Illana Perlman
12:45 p.m.	Interview with a recent graduate	Sarah Somerton ('15)
1:00 p.m.	Lunch	
1:45 p.m.	Panel: "Demystifying field instruction"	Moderator: Tammy Muskat Panelists: Kayleigh Arkalgud Victoria Bailey Marisa Di Nardo David MacFarlane
3:15 p.m.	Evaluation and Closing Remarks	Eileen McKee

Keynote

Students and alumnae across the world enthusiastically proclaim the importance of field learning, and especially of their field instructors, as the most crucial influence in preparing them for professional practice. This presentation will highlight the key dynamics underlying this assertion and consider how teaching in the field is one of the best ways for practising social workers to continue their professional learning and enthusiasm for their chosen field.

Marion Bogo, Professor, Officer of the Order of Canada

Biography of Keynote speaker

Marion Bogo

Marion is a Professor at the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work and a former Field Director, and Dean. Her research interest is social work education, especially field education and assessment of professional competence. She has published over 100 journal articles and book chapters, and 5 books. Professor Bogo has consulted to schools of social work in North America, Asia, and Europe. In 2013 she was awarded the *Significant Lifetime Achievement in Social Work Education Award* from the Council of Social Work Education, USA in recognition of her contributions to social work education and to improving assessment of professional competence. In 2014 she was appointed as an Officer of the *Order of Canada* for her achievements in the field of social work as a scholar and teacher, and for advancing the practice in Canada and abroad.

Biographies of Seminar Presenter, Panel Moderator, Interviewer, and Closing Commenter

Illana Perlman, MSW, RSW (Seminar Presenter)

Illana is an Adjunct Lecturer at the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work and collaborates closely with the Faculty on a number of levels. For the past 24 years she has been a trauma social worker at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, where she is also the Education Practice Leader. Illana has pioneered a standard for Social Work Student Education and has published in a variety of journals and books. Social work student education is her passion, and she has been a field instructor for 28 years. In 2014 she was awarded the *Heart of Social Work Award* by the North American Field Educators and Directors, in recognition of her excellence in field education. In 2014 she was also awarded the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work's *Platinum Award for Excellence in Field Education*, for her contributions to social work student education.

Tammy Muskat, MSW, RSW (Panel Moderator)

Tammy is an Adjunct Lecturer at the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work. She is the former Professional Practice Leader for social work at North York General Hospital where she was responsible for the coordination of student social work field placement and related education initiatives. Social Work student education is near and dear to Tammy where over the span of a lengthy career (in a number of professional capacities) she spear headed, supervised, coordinated and managed various programs specific to social work education. In 2010 Tammy was awarded the *Heart of Social Work Award* by the North American Field Educators and Directors, in recognition of her excellence and contributions to field education.

Roxanne Power, MSW, RSW (Interviewer)

Roxanne is past Practicum Director at the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work and now Professor Emeritus; she continues to be closely affiliated with the Practicum Office and has published and presented internationally in the area of field education.

Eileen McKee, MSW, RSW (Closing Comments)

Eileen is currently the Assistant Dean, Field Education, at the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work. In her previous roles as clinical director and executive director in addiction treatment programs, as consultant on the Provincial Elder Abuse Strategy, and as manager of federally-funded initiatives to research and recommend income -support programs for people living with episodic disabilities, Eileen has consistently supervised social work students. She is committed to sharing the passion for field education that she and others have with FIFSW students - our future field instructors.

Biographies of the Aspiring Field Instructor, Panelists, and Video Contributor

Sarah Somerton ('15), MSW RSW, North York General Hospital and Sunnybrook Centre for Health Sciences

Sarah is a recent graduate working in the area of perinatal social work. While completing her MSW, Sarah participated on the Practicum Advisory Committee alongside other student representatives, field instructors, education coordinators, faculty representatives, and Practicum Office staff. She contributed to projects and discussions from the student perspective, always keeping in mind feedback from her peers. As one of the first students to enroll in the summer practicum option after it was formalized, Sarah also benefited from the innovations of the committee in the years prior to her arrival. She is currently employed as a social worker in the NICU at North York General Hospital and the Women and Babies program at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre.

Kayleigh Arkalgud ('12), MSW, RSW, Boost Child & Youth Advocacy

Boost provides services to children and youth who have experienced abuse or violence or who are at risk of abuse or violence, and to their families. After graduating, Kayleigh provided children and youth court preparation and support through the criminal court process at Boost. For the past two years, Kayleigh's responsibilities include trauma assessments and interventions for children between the ages of 4-18. This is Kayleigh's second year as a field instructor for FIFSW.

Victoria Bailey ('13), MSW, RSW, Hincks-Dellcrest Centre

Victoria has practised at the Hincks-Dellcrest Centre since graduating from the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work in 2013. In addition to her work with clients, Victoria is also a field instructor to a second year student.

Marisa Di Nardo ('14), MSW, RSW, Circle of Care

Marisa is currently employed at Circle of Care where her responsibilities include counselling, advocacy, and linkages to resources, to clients on her case load, facilitates support groups, chairs the elder abuse steering committee, and sits on several internal and external committees.

Marisa has provided supervision to several BSW and MSW students. She finds the experience to be challenging while at the same time an educational journey for herself.

David MacFarlane ('88), MSW, RSW, Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre

After graduating from the FIFSW, David worked in geriatric mental health for the next 31 years, including with the Sunnybrook Community Psychiatric Services for the Elderly for the past 25. He has a special interest in dementia, depression and substance abuse. David first started taking MSW students 20 years ago. In 2014 David received the *Silver Award for Excellence in Field Education*, from by the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, as a special recognition of the contributions he has made as a field educator.

Blair Audet ('12), MSW RSW, University of Toronto Schools (video)

At UTS, Blair is responsible for supporting the social and emotional wellbeing of students through individual and group sessions, resourcing teachers, parents, and students with respect to mental health and the UTS full school support model, and developing curricular and co-curricular programs to enhance student wellbeing. Prior to this, Blair was manager of national HIV and AIDS awareness, education, and fundraising programs for the Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research (CANFAR). This is Blair's second year as a field instructor for FIFSW.

Seminar Notes (Illana Perlman)

“Passing on the Torch: Students Becoming Educators”

1. WHY DO WE NEED FIELD INSTRUCTION?

Imagine that you never had a social work placement? Imagine that your MSW program focused purely on classroom teaching, with the only direct practice experience being through classroom simulations, such as role-playing and OSCEs. Think about what that would mean for you...how different your understanding of social work and practice would be... impossible to develop, some would say.

A hallmark of social work education is field education – the educationally directed hands-on-learning experience students have in the day-to-day world of social work practice. Field education has been a central and critical element in social work education from its inception, with the key goal of enabling students to integrate the knowledge, values and skills that are learnt in the classroom with agency practice, and in so doing, to prepare competent, effective, and ethical social workers (Teigiser 2009, Bogo 2015).

I often test this notion of the pre-eminence of field education, when I am speaking to a group of practising social workers, and I ask them the following 2 questions: How many of you remember the name of the professor of your first classroom course in your MSW? How many of you remember the name of your first field instructor? When a clear majority of hands wave in the air after the second question, the critical importance of field instruction to social work education is unequivocal. In the social work profession, field instructors are one of the most influential factors in the student’s professional development. Students and alumni characterize their field education experiences as the most significant component in preparing them for their future practice.

Over the past century, a rich body of knowledge about field education has emerged, with the literature espousing the dynamics of teaching and learning. In exploring the context of field education, there is a plethora of writing about the characteristics of organizations, of teaching institutions, of students and of field instructors, as well as the challenges being faced, particularly in terms of generating sufficient field placement opportunities for social work students. However, despite all that has been researched and written, little appears to have focused on the pivotal starting point of preparing our field instructors for the profession - by socializing our students during their professional training program into becoming an educator. It is this crucial aspect that we have viewed as the ‘missing link’ (McKee, Muskat, Perlman 2015).

At the FIFSW, we are delighted to be bridging this gap for you now, in providing our students with this seminal program on “Becoming Educators”. We all recognize how critical the role of the field instructor is, and today is your first step in becoming one.

2. THE BENEFITS OF BECOMING A FIELD INSTRUCTOR

Being a field instructor brings significant benefits, for the individual instructor, for the agency and for the profession as a whole. As a field instructor for the FIFSW, you will have the opportunity to:

- Influence the profession and guide and impact the practice of future social workers, enabling its renewal
- Develop and maintain linkage with the FIFSW
- Have input into practicum curriculum and participate in FIFSW committees
- Apply for Adjunct Lecturer status with your commitment to supervise for 3 academic years
- Attend workshops and training offered at the FIFSW and the university
- Receive a University of Toronto library card and accessing related services
- Consult with and be connected to colleagues in the field
- Keep current with social work knowledge and theory, which is stimulating
- Grow and develop in professional practice, through the process of reflection and supervision with students
- Include this on your resume and educational dossier. For many social work positions, it is now required that you offer student education opportunities, as demarcated in job descriptions and at hiring interviews.

For the agency, employees are challenged and professional development is enhanced when staff supervises students. Students can rejuvenate and refresh an organization with their vitality, enthusiasm and new ideas. Students are able to provide more intensive service to some clients, based on smaller workload, and additional projects and research endeavours can be initiated due to the additional resources. By having students, the agency also demonstrates its commitment to the profession and to the community. Furthermore, with successful student placements, these students are often hired into employee positions, which is often an easy transition as the student has already oriented to the agency and its procedures.

Some practitioners consider field instruction to be somewhat of a 'hindrance' rather than a 'benefit' – it takes 'additional' time, energy and work in most settings, as clinical workloads do not reduce by virtue of having a student in placement. Indeed, it is usually a 'juggling act', to balance a demanding caseload together with the nature of an MSW placement that you are supervising. This is especially challenging if you are dealing with a student in difficulty. However, I prefer to regard field instruction as a true privilege, to have the opportunity to shape the practitioners of tomorrow. Not every professional is tasked with this honour. Through personal experience, I have found that the impact that a field instructor can have on a social work student is in fact immeasurable. In the words of Albert Einstein: "Teaching should be such that what is offered is perceived as a valuable gift and not as a hard duty"

3. YOU CAN DO IT!

As with contemplating undertaking that first client assessment in practicum, we know that as you sit here today and think about yourself becoming a field instructor ... yes, before you have even graduated...you will naturally have some level of anxiety and uncertainty. A few questions might be going through your mind: Where would I begin? Would I know how to 'teach' a student? Do I know my theory well enough to impart it? Would I be a fair evaluator?

There is considerable support for all field instructors – those who are new and those who are more experienced – through a variety of mechanisms and on an ongoing basis, to enable you to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to become an educator. As a field instructor for the FIFSW, you have easy access to the faculty field liaison person and the staff at the Practicum Office, who are always willing to help clarify any aspects, walk you through any issues that require problem solving, and help assist you with relevant information related to appropriate learning and resources/tools for you as a field educator. As already stated, the FIFSW provides workshops for field instructors throughout the year, across multiple topics related to field instruction. The FIFSW Continuing Education program offers sessions designed specifically to acquiring the requisite knowledge, skills and competencies to be a field instructor. Furthermore, the practicum link on the FIFSW website is also replete with resource information, including links to literature, especially helpful in preparing the first time field instructor.

Depending on your setting, and especially if it is a larger organization, you might have access to an Educational Coordinator – a social worker whose role includes administering the student education program at that agency. This person will help facilitate the set up and undertaking of all placements, and also be a vital link for you and with the faculty. The Educational Coordinator also serves as a mentor to the agency's field instructors, helping them review any challenging situations as well as navigating the process of the placement – the orientation, the learning contract preparation and the evaluations. In agencies that do not have an Educational Coordinator, we would highly encourage that you seek some mentoring/support from another staff person who has supervision experience (this might be a social worker or it could be someone in another health profession). Reaching out for support, and for knowledge and skill development, is critical for one's professional development both as an educator and as a clinician.

As a steppingstone to becoming a field instructor, we highly recommend that you start by "getting your feet wet" by offering student shadows in your workplace. For example, the FIFSW arranges field visits for all the MSW 1 students in the late fall, as an opportunity for the student to be exposed to social work in practice: "A Morning In the Life of Social Worker". Another option is for you to offer to have a social work colleague's student in your agency shadow you for a morning, giving you experience of the teaching/learning process, as you discuss your role and debrief on any interviews you undertake. Another option to

ease into the role of field instructor is to set up your first field instruction placement in a 'buddy' system with a colleague. This is considered a 'shared field instructor' placement model, wherein one student is placed with 2 supervisors concurrently. Often the one instructor might be more experienced than the other and might play a more 'primary' role in the experience, depending on what is negotiated with the FIFSW. In this process, the new field instructor has the support and direction from the more experienced instructor, and often takes the lead in such aspects as the content of the learning contract, and the evaluations.

Many larger organizations offer workshops and courses related to being an educator. While they might not be social work specific, the generic aspects that they focus on will be of considerable value to you in the process of being a field instructor. We would also encourage you to consider conferences and training programs offered "in the field" that are related to field instruction and becoming an educator – the FIFSW can provide you with some important links in this regard.

In the final analysis, there is a parallel process between worker and client, and field instructor and student. There is much overlap and similarity, particularly in terms of the approach, which requires a foundation of empathy and trust, and the development of a positive working relationship to drive toward the goal. In the case of the field instructor and the student dyad, the overall goal is that of applying and integrating the knowledge, skills and values of the profession, and taught in the classroom, into practice, to enable the student to become a competent, ethical and effective beginning social worker. Certainly each one of you can become a field instructor! As with becoming a competent clinician, it takes knowledge, skill development and practice to become a good field instructor. I am reminded here of the 10,000 hour rule: the concept developed by Gladwell (2008) that the key to achieving world class expertise in any skill, to a large extent, is a matter of practising the correct way, for a total of around 10,000 hours.

4. TIPS FOR SUCCESS

We are going to ask you to do something for yourself. Before your practicum is completed, we suggest that you take just a few minutes to think about the following...even write it down and keep it somewhere for later review. Consider what was 'positive' about your field instruction experience, and consider what you found to be 'negative'.

Certainly there are different types of field instructors – we are all individuals, and have different styles, different approaches to teaching and varied backgrounds. Think about what kind of field instructor do you want to be? Sometimes we learn the most clearly who we don't want to be, perhaps from a field instructor who is 'not so good'.

There are several keys to success for new or aspiring field instructors. What follows are tips I have developed in my journey as a field instructor these past 28 years, some of which were articulated in Social Work Today (2012):

- **Know the requirements** – how many years of practice are required before you can be a field instructor, what field instruction workshops or classes you are expected to participate in. The FIFSW Practicum Manual is a vital resource for field instructors.
- **Have realistic expectations** - being a field instructor is a serious investment in time and effort, beyond the formal weekly supervision time. It is important that you undertake this responsibility when you can best accommodate it in terms of your work commitments. Students are not our “indentured servants”... they are not “an extra pair of hands”.
- **Protect time for supervision, be prepared and expect student to be prepared** – ensure that the student has the minimum time set aside each week for structured supervision, have an agenda for each session, and require that your student do the same. This will facilitate maximizing these sessions and ensure that both you and the student have your items covered.
- **Teach and be willing to learn** – field instructors are teachers, and need to be able to help students connect classroom knowledge with practice situations. Effective field instructors should be able to impart knowledge, and also be open to learning from students. The field instructor–student relationship is the key vehicle to enable the process of learning. It needs to be one based on trust, respect and mutual confidence.
- **You are a primary role model for the student** – be aware that the student is aware of your behaviour and conduct, with clients and in all your interactions. Modelling is a powerful vehicle for the transmission of values and conduct, and one of your greatest responsibilities as a field instructor, and requires a conscious effort. “The teacher role demands the same ethics and the same conscious use of self as professional social work practice” (Baretti 2008).
- **Balance flexibility and structure** – students have different styles of learning and field instructors need to incorporate these realities to meet the best interests of the student. There need to be clear communication about expectations and boundaries, particularly at the onset of the practicum. There needs to be a happy medium between the extremes of ‘being a student’s best friend and being a strict authoritarian’.
- **Seek out agency support** – this includes support from colleagues through the process of field instruction, as well as from the organization in terms of their acceptance of the student. This is usually more easily negotiated in larger teaching centres, with designated educators as well as a culture of student education.
- **Stay connected** – field instructors can receive valuable support from the field education staff at the university, particularly for consultation around questions or more challenging situations. Reaching out to other field instructors, particularly when you might work in a smaller agency is also a helpful approach, to give you a backdrop of what others are experiencing.
- **Be creative** – think about ways to give students experiences in a variety of aspects related to social work practice that might not be within the agency’s scope of

practice, but that can still be woven into supervision, and enrich the student's learning opportunities.

- **Be positive yet honest** – it is common for people to complain about their jobs, but field instructors need to be aware of the impact of excessive negativity in the workplace and how it impacts students' perceptions of the profession. Field instructors with positive attitudes and a passion for what they are doing can make students' learning experiences exceptional. However, it is best to balance this with honesty about some of the harsh realities of the profession, as they might be experienced, as well as the instructor's own limitations. For example, acknowledging where you could have done something better, will reassure the student that we all make mistakes, and can be one of the greatest 'teachable' moments.
- **Do not play games and do not allow games to be played** – Alfred Kadushin referred to this in his writing, pointing out the negative outcomes involved for student and instructor alike. Open, honest and forthright communication, and not 'holding on' to an issue, is usually the best approach.
- **Be aware that a power paradigm exists** – this is inherent in the field instructor-student relationship, where the instructor holds the 'authority' to evaluate the student, with the 'power' to pass or fail. Acknowledge this aspect during the field placement, and ensure that preparation for all evaluations are done with due diligence, and with fair notice to student of any concerns that might be identified. Nothing should be received as a major 'surprise' at an evaluation point.
- **Be supportive yet 'firm'** – do not forget what the student experience is like, including the pressure of balancing papers due, with client work and practicum stressors, in addition to possible domestic issues the student might be experiencing. Allow for flexibility when appropriate; however help the student to work within the parameters of the practicum. Be clear that this is a working relationship, not a therapeutic relationship.
- **It's not a one-size-fits-all proposition** - every student is different, and comes with different strengths and weaknesses, in addition to their learning styles and level of knowledge and skill. You need to be able to shape your supervisory model depending on the student and on the Year. For example, expectations for a Year 1 MSW student are markedly different to those of a Year 2. Aim to enable the student to achieve their best; avoid mediocrity.
- **Be passionate about social work and the value of our profession** – this is critical in facilitating the student's best learning, and in inspiring their professional development. In the words of Socrates: "Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel".

5. PASSING ON THE TORCH

In this seminar, I have reviewed the critical role of field instruction, its benefits and components of the "how to" to enable you to become a field instructor. Our message today is simple and clear: renewing the profession of social work is dependent on social work practitioners being field instructors. In just 8 weeks' time, each one of you sitting in this

audience will be a social work practitioner. We need you to remember that you were fortunate to have a field instructor (or two) who enabled you to reach the point that you are at today. It is essential that you commit to becoming a field instructor once you are established in practice. This is pivotal to the continuity and strength of our profession.

In conclusion, let us agree that the question is not whether you will be a field instructor, but rather when you will be a field instructor!

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“Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel.”

Socrates

To become a field instructor, please contact the Practicum Office,
practicum.fsw@utoronto.ca or (416) 978-3262.