Carolyn Simon

Research Summary

Project title: *"Weaving Indigenous Ways of Knowing in Social Work Education: A student's perspective"*

Introduction

My research project built off a previous research opportunity with the I-CUREUS program from F2021-W2022, under the supervision of Dr. Beth Martin. The aim of this project was to examine the many methods that social work instructors have employed in their classrooms to better aid them in decolonizing and Indigenizing social work education.

Research methods

During the course of the summer, I reviewed literature that helped me understand the valuable research that has already been conducted. This review focused on four topics: Indigenous pedagogy, Indigenous research methods, Indigenous social work, social work education, and structural social work. Consultation and engagement with students was initially planned, pending ethics approval. This step, however, was omitted due to student researcher capacity, which will be further explained in the "limitations" section of this report.

I began to write up my research into summaries to provide general information on decolonizing and Indigenizing the social work curriculum.

Key findings/observations

The literature that I reviewed was primarily written in Canadian and Australian contexts, with some articles being based in the United States. Indigenous pedagogy focused heavily on narrative approaches (storytelling), challenging the current Eurocentric conception of 'valid knowledge' and welcoming Indigenous Ways of knowing through personal and professional experiences (Fellner, 2016; Hill & Wilkinson, 2014; Lowan-Trudeau, 2018; McDowall, 2020). Much of the content on Indigenous pedagogy tied into social work education, allowing for non-Indigenous social work students to safely ask difficult and uncomfortable questions (Choate & et al., 2022; Gair, 2018).

Indigenous social work draws connections to the land and social determinants of health, specifically highlighting that Indigenous youth thrive when they have the chance to connect with the land (Ansloos et al., 2022; Lines, 2019; Salusky, 2022).

Indigenous qualitative research methods emphasized the importance of community-researcher relationships (Mataira, 2019). Indigenous data sovereignty in quantitative research is important as it asserts the collective right to data about our peoples, lands, resources, and ways of being. In a Canadian context, OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access, Possession) is employed and taught to researchers to ensure this right is respected (Walter & Suina, 2019).

Shortcomings

The project was expected to be conducted on a 'full-time' basis, at approximately 35 hours per week. However, varying abilities in my performance as a student and researcher with a learning disability have shown that the expected 'full-time' output would reflect ~50 hours per week.

Other shortcomings included family emergencies increasing my workload, and the realization that engagement upon ethics approval would extend well beyond the research period.

The final limitation included time constraints and Indigenous protocol in research. Conversations with my supervisor, a white settler, gave us the opportunity to learn that consultation with Indigenous communities must be conducted from the beginning. Additionally, as I am a Mi'kmaq student studying on Algonquin Anishinaabe territory, I have come to realize

that projects of this nature would be better carried out with the involvement of Algonuqin students.

Recommendations

While consultation with community members at all levels of the project is important, extra care must be taken when beginning ethics protocols, during the ethics review and engagement. This will ensure that future research will be grounded in consultation and relationships, a necessary part of Indigenous research.

Future possible areas of research include the tensions between mixed-race Indigenous people and a possible hesitancy to self-identify as Indigenous in an academic context (Lowan-Trudeau, 2018).

Additionally, it is my hope that this research can one day continue at Carleton, to aid in the support of Indigenous students in the School of Social Work.

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Salusky, Mataira, Walter & Suina, Bryant , Ostashewski,