



**Challenges and Opportunities:
Innovative Social Work Placement Delivery during COVID-19**

**2020 ANZSWWER Symposium
November 20, 2020**

We acknowledge and pay respect to the ancestors and descendants of the Lands upon which we meet and study. We are mindful that the Land always was and always will be Aboriginal Land.

Abstract

This presentation shares the emerging themes from current research by the International Network of Co-operative Inquirers into the challenges to and opportunities for innovative delivery in social work placements across distance. Since commencing this research, COVID-19 has thrown a spotlight on the need for such innovation. Internationally, COVID-19 has forced educational reform, disrupted already strained field education systems, and increased the pressure upon educators and industry-based professionals to immediately develop creative options for placements. Field educators are urgently addressing two interlinked global trends: that workplace learning is radically changing in an unknown way; and the consequent immediate need to create innovative placement options with limited guidance. Key findings will be presented from co-operative inquiries examining innovative placements in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and Scotland. Field educators and students in these five countries are using blended learning, innovation, connectivity and collaboration to cross the barriers caused by distance, where distance is defined geographically and/or sociologically. Further, this presentation provides an opportunity for critical dialogue about mediating the tensions between four related requirements: (i) student needs to develop professional skills and knowledge to be work-ready; (ii) academic governance rules; (iii) professional association mandates; and (iv) industry capacity.



LIFE
WITHOUT
BARRIERS



Erica Russ, University of New England
Lynn Berger, Southern Cross University
Monica Short, Charles Sturt University
Louise Whitaker, Southern Cross University





OVERVIEW

- What is the International Network of Co-operative Inquirers?
- Demand for innovative placements accentuated by COVID19
- Case studies (3 of the 4 – focus on international)
- Emerging tensions

WHAT IS CO-OPERATIVE INQUIRY?

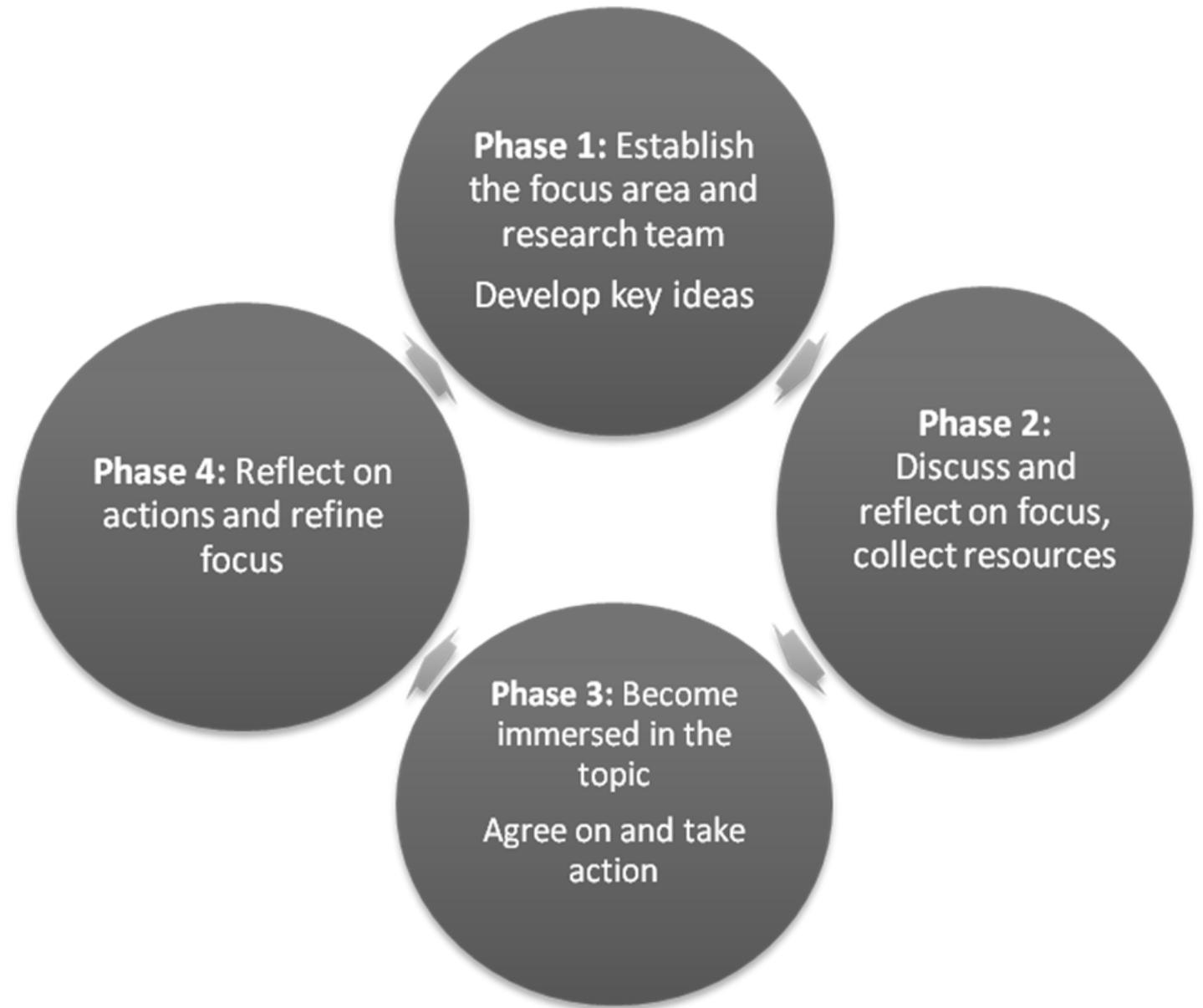
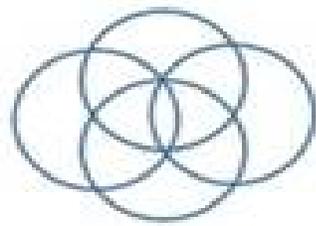


Figure 1: Inquiry phases (Heron & Reason, 2008; Short & Healy, 2017).



INCI Inq

International Network of Cooperative Inquirers

- Carole Adamson – Auckland Uni, New Zealand
- Cherie Appleton – Auckland Uni, New Zealand
- Lynn Berger – Southern Cross University, Australia
- Prof. Bill Boyd – Southern Cross Uni, Australia
- Rohena Duncombe – Charles Sturt University, Australia
- Robyn Fitzroy – Rural Health, University of Sydney, Australia
- Sheriden Fyson – Victim Services, NSW, Australia.
- Dr Carmel Halton – University of College Cork, Ireland
- Sara Hitchin – University of Stirling, Scotland
- Dr Nicola Ivory – Charles Sturt University, Australia
- Brenda Morris – Carleton University, Canada
- Natalie Morton – Australian Catholic University, Australia
- Joanne Rose – University of College Cork, Ireland
- Dr Emma Rush – Charles Sturt University, Australia
- Dr Erica Russ – University of New England, Australia
- Monica Short – Charles Sturt University, Australia
- Dr Louise Whitaker – South Cross University, Australia
- Mark Woolven – Life Without Barriers, Australia

Coordinator: Monica Short mshort@csu.edu.au

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF CO-OPERATIVE INQUIRERS (INCInq)



Colleagues from industry and academia. Investigating the intersection between academia and industry; for example, workplace learning



Collaborating – writing with rather than about people.



Each year we mutually agree on a field of investigation.



Focus on connectivity and innovations that we have experienced and which we perceive overcome complexities in the field.



Aim to bring clarity to chaos and by presenting potential strategies and solutions.



Turning practice wisdom into theory, which is then shared publically.



DEMAND FOR
INNOVATIVE
PLACEMENTS
ACCENTUATED
BY COVID19

What are the current challenges to, and opportunities for, innovative delivery of social work placements which overcome distance?

NEW ZEALAND

Collaboration:

- Students from 12 health disciplines sharing education & training opportunities whilst living together

Innovation:

- Urban students working in rural setting away from home area – Eastern Bay of Plenty

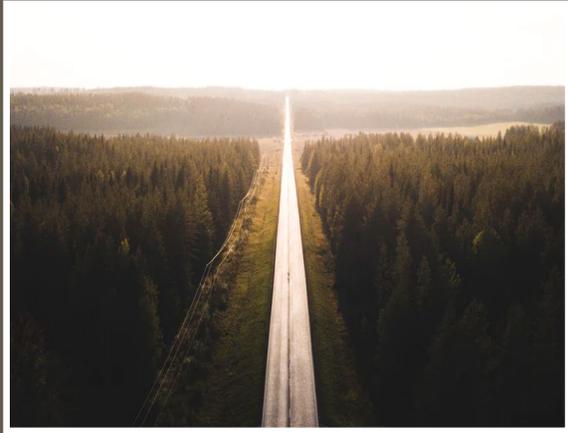
Connectivity:

- Non-Māori students embedded in predominantly Māori community
- Experiencing 'noho marae' – total immersion stay on marae (meeting place to which the local sub-tribe has genealogical links) & learning Indigenous health practices

RURAL HEALTH INTERPROFESSIONAL IMMERSION PROGRAMME (RHIP) AS AN INNOVATION MODEL FOR PRACTICUM



2019 RHIP Noho



PLACEMENT INNOVATION IN CANADA

CROSSING PHYSICAL AND DISCIPLINARY DISTANCE



- Learning goals: self-awareness, land-based healing, self-care, practice maturity, innovation in mental health programming
- The placement: Ecopsychology, land-based, rural, distant learning environment
- What made up the placement?
 - Group program, Supervision, Literature Review, Innovative group program development & delivery, Reflective writing, Contemplative experiential learning with supervision (Camino de Santiago)
- Facilitated through technology – online video conferencing, phone, email
- Extensive approval process based on student's custom-designed proposal
- Questions arising:
 - What makes a social work placement, a social work placement?
 - What criteria are used to evaluate/approve non-traditional and land-based learning?
 - Do self-directed, customised placements result in deeper, more transferable learning?
 - How are educators held accountable? What are risks?

IRELAND

DIVERSE AND CREATIVE APPROACHES TO ACCESSING STUDENT PLACEMENTS
THAT OVERCOME SOCIOLOGICAL BARRIERS TO PLACEMENT AVAILABILITY

- Requirement to work within the requirements for placements of our regulatory body
- trying to accommodate the learning needs of students and the reality of limited availability of suitable placement sites
- we have developed some inventive and creative approaches to placements:
 - high-quality long arm supervision across a variety of agencies
 - practice learning and student units
 - the promotion of lead specialist practice learning teams
 - online CPD opportunities to support and up-skill practice teachers
 - additional training for students in the use of technology in social work practice



EMERGING TENSIONS

- Student needs to develop professional skills and knowledge to be work-ready
- Academic governance rules
- Professional association mandates
- Industry capacity and expectations



EMERGING BENEFITS

- Increased need for collaborative approaches
- Promotion of social change opportunities
- Influence of social work in new fields
- Positioning graduates for emerging delivery systems by developing different skill sets (eg telehealth)
- Building workforce which is in high demand

REFERENCES

- Canadian Association of Social Work Education. (2020) *COVID-19– Field Education Resources*. Retrieved from: <https://caswe-acfts.ca/covid-19-field-education-resources-from-carleton-university/>
- Henrickson, M. (2020) 'Kiwis and COVID-19: The Aotearoa New Zealand response to the global pandemic', *The International Journal of Community and Social Development*, 2(2), pp. 121-133.
- Henley, J., Deverick, K., and Hay K. (2020) 'What happens when your government tells you to come home?', *Aotearoa New Zealand social work* 32(2), pp. 55–64.
- Heron, J., & Reason, P. (2008). Extending epistemology within a Co-operative Inquiry. Retrieved from <http://www.human-inquiry.com/EECI.htm>
- Hodges, L. and Martin, A. (2020) 'Enriching work-integrated learning students' opportunities online during a global pandemic (COVID-19)', *International Journal of Work-Integrated Learning, Special Issue*, 21(4), pp. 415-423
- International Federation of Social Work. (2014). 'Global definition of social work (from 2014)', available online at: <https://www.ifsw.org/what-is-social-work/global-definition-of-social-work/>
- Short, M. (2018). The co-operative inquiry research method: A lived experience. In M. Pawar, W. Bowles, & K. Bell (Eds.), *Social work: Innovations and insights*. (pp. 232-244). North Melbourne, Vic: Australian Scholarly Publishing.
- Short, M., & Healy, J. (2017). Writing 'with' not 'about': Examples in Co-operative Inquiry. In S. Gair & A.V. Luyun (Eds.), *Sharing Qualitative Research: Showing Lived Experience and Community Narratives*. (pp. 188-203). London, UK: Routledge.