Facilitated Practice-based Research

An empowering pedagogical approach to alleviating research anxiety and sustaining research capacity in social work practitioners

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Presentation plan:

1. Bourdieu's Field Theory, Facilitated Practice-based Research (FPR) – empowerment model, Lesley Deacon
2. Teaching FPR, Carrie Phillips
3. Participatory Action Research Methodology, Lesley Deacon
4. Participatory Action Research Project, Zeta Bikova
5. Findings, from Cohorts 1, 2 and 3, Lesley Deacon
6. Next steps, Lesley Deacon
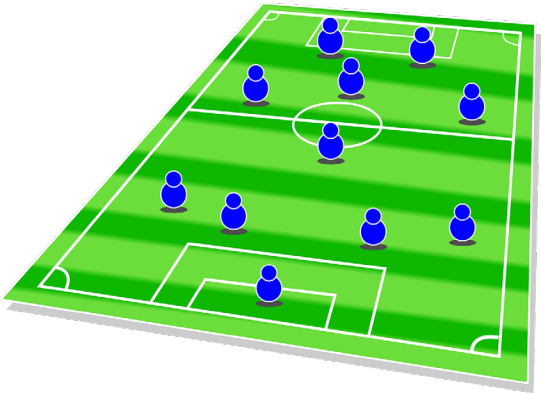
Research anxiety:
application of Bourdieu's field theory

Field-specific struggles over power, **success based on inherited or acquired** *capital*.

Habitus – dispositions acquired by individuals as they operate in a particular field.

Field of **social work research** (Deacon, 2023, p.105), HEIs have:

- Economic: more access to research funding.
- Cultural: more further education options.
- Social: more access to research networks.
- Symbolic: HEI research seen as legitimate, language intellectualized.

- BUT... Researcher Development Framework (RDF) devised based on empirical data to highlight '**what makes excellent researchers**' (Vitae, 2022: 3, cited in Deacon 2023)

- Comparison with SW skills/knowledge:
  - high level communication skills;
  - high level of subject knowledge;
  - Understand values and ethics; and
  - ability to assess and understand issues and devise plans.

'**Social work students, practitioners and educators have essential research skills and knowledge but do not possess the symbolic capital to reframe these in the field of social work research and are habituated into research anxiety**'. (Deacon, 2023, p.102)

Facilitated Practice-based Research (FPR)
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Aim of FPR is to facilitate **practitioners to reframe their skills as research skills** (Deacon, 2023, p.102)

- FPR is an **empowerment model** designed by Dr Lesley Deacon, in collaboration with the <u>Wallsend Children's Community</u> (WCC), to teach participatory research to practitioners, in action, within practice where research terminology is temporarily moved aside. (Deacon, 202

- The approach assumes practitioners already have research skills and knowledge that they use every day in their practice e.g. investigating problems to understand them and develop intervention strategies.

- The aim of FPR is to support practitioners to see these links and reframe their skills and knowledge, through conducting research as a group, thus developing their research capacity.
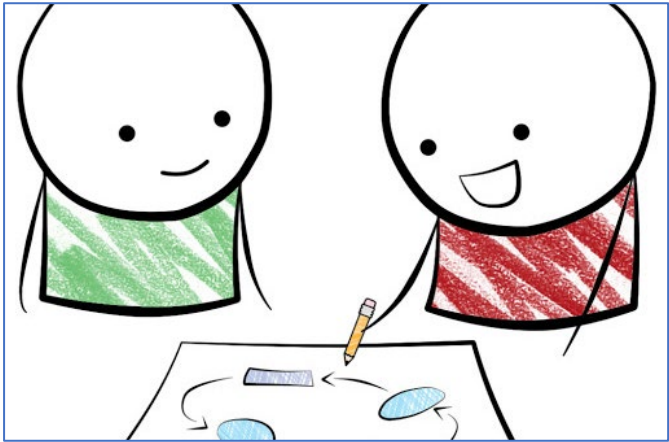
Facilitated Practice-based Research

FPR

Reframing Practice as Research

CP

Assessment skills? ⟷ Semi-structured interview?

Reading the case file? ⟷ Literature review?

Writing a report? ⟷ Writing a report!

Bravery
Professional curiosity

OUTCOMES

Learning by doing
Reducing anxiety
Putting research into practice
Evaluating outcomes
Sustained transformation

FPR Group Research Projects

Partners		Project Title
University of Sunderland	NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNCIL	• How is consent experienced by parents who were referred to the Children and Families: Early Help Team at North Yorkshire Council
University of Sunderland	north east social work alliance	• Newly Qualified Social Worker's perceptions and experiences of support during the Assessed and Supported Year of Employment
University of Sunderland	north east social work alliance	• Working together in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults
University of Sunderland		• Understanding referral processes for responding to youth homelessness

Participatory Action Research (PAR) Methodology

Research Associates:
Zeta Bikova
Emma Aggar

FPR has been evaluated through qualitative PAR: **how can we bridge the gap between social work research and practice?**

There are five stages to this study, where FPR is implemented and evaluated in different settings and with different practitioners.

- **1.** Small Charitable Organisation – support for children and families in areas of high deprivation, in person
- **2.** Small Charitable Organisation – support for youth homelessness, online
- **3.** A Local Authority – children's services practitioners, online
- 4. Three Local Authorities – children's and adult services practitioners, in person
- 5. In planning stage but aimed at 12 Local Authorities and a mix of children's and adult services practitioners, in person

ZB

Methods

- Qualitative focus groups (n=7):
  - Cohort 1 – non-moderated recorded focus group
  - Cohort 2 – moderated recorded focus group (ZB)
  - Cohort 3 – moderated, recorded semi structured interviews (ZB)

- Transcript data thematically analysed

- Data shared for these cohorts.

Ethics

Cohort 1- 008601, February 2021
Cohort 2- 011989, March 2022
Cohort 3 –013287, July 2022

Table: Participant information

Organisation/cohort	Code	Role	Gender
1	P1	Community practitioner	Female
	P2	Community practitioner	Female
2	P3	Senior coordinator	Female
	P4	Senior coordinator	Male
	P5	Manager	Male
3	P6	Social Worker	Female
	P7	Social Worker	Female

Self-reported Findings suggest:

1. practitioners do habituate research anxiety;

2. they can conduct research but name it differently; and

3. their research confidence needs development, through recognising it and beginning to name their work as research.

1.

I was a bit apprehensive about the research training, P3

I have never liked research; I find it very dry and annoying because of all of the processes you have to do, P4

You need to have confidence in your own ability to do it, as it can seem massive, P1

3.

The … terms are not naturally there in our heads. It is only on reflecting back now that you realise you have done everything point-by-point right, P2

It certainly made me more confident in carrying out…research P6

I really do think I gained a lot from this programme… I wish I did [it] before my Masters. P7

Table 2: Practitioner terms for research

Practitioner term	Research term
Community walkabout	Ethnography
Day sheets	Field notes
Group chat	Focus group
Note taking	Data collection
Readthrough to see what they are talking about	Thematic analysis

Deacon, 2023, p.112

But... the journey to research confidence takes time not a quick fix but about sustained transformation

NEXT STEPS

- FPR programme :
  - Cohort 4, in data analysis stage
  - Cohort 5, last of the evaluation stage now in data collection.

- Data to be shared in publications and conferences from cohorts 4 and 5.

- Development of Practitioner Researchers, taking the approach to Skills for Care, BASW, Social Work England and NIHR.

- Research Projects from Cohort 4:

Thank you for listening!

If you would like to be involved,
please email:

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Any questions

Bibliography

ARTICLES

Deacon. L. (2023) 'Facilitated Practice-based Research: A model of Empowerment to Reduce Research Anxiety in Social Work Practitioners and Reframe Cultural Capital, *European Journal of Social Work Research*, inaugural issue 1(1), pp.102-117.

Deacon, L. (2022) 'Emancipatory Practice Development in Social Welfare Service Evaluation – a worked example', *International Practice Development Journal.*

CONFERENCES

Deacon, L., Phillips, C. and Bikova, Z. (2023) 'Facilitated Practice-based Research: An empowering Pedagogical Approach to Reframe Research Capacity in Social Work Practitioners', JSWEC Conference, Glasgow and FES Conference, University of Sunderland

Deacon, L. and Lonbay, S. (2023) 'Narrowing the Gap between Social Work Research and Practice: how social workers make use of research and what impact does it have on practice?' European Conference for Social Work Research, Milan, Italy.

FORTHCOMING

Deacon, L. (forthcoming) 'Facilitated Practice-based Research: A Trauma-informed Pedagogical Approach to Reframing Research Anxiety to Build Research Capacity in Social Work Practitioners'