



Yours, Mine, & Ours: The Art of Sharing Field Takeaways

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During SEED Week, one workshop facilitator faced an audience of fresh-faced School of Social Work students and informed them that one key to successful graduate student involvement was recognizing that it is impossible to have every experience imaginable. While that may be mostly true, one of the all-time most untapped field resources by Social Work students is within reach: each other. By sharing major takeaways from field placements, Social Work students may find it is possible to have multiple field experiences at once, after all.

Have you ever been curious about the wealth of knowledge you may be missing out on if you're in a strictly macro or micro placement, and want to bridge that gap? Close the distance between "yours" and "mine," and practice how to convey your field experiences in ways that help others learn from you, and help you tell a better story about your takeaways. We guarantee, it will help forge valuable sharing opportunities between colleagues – and prepare you for that upcoming interview!

Use the following list as a model to discuss field placement lessons with social work colleagues, and study the art of sharing mutually beneficial experiential education.

1. Discuss how you acclimated yourself to your new

environment. Social Work students frequently discuss "entering and exiting" communities. How did you enter and build relationships with both clients and coworkers?

2. Talk about how you gained your bearings. What have been some of the biggest learning curves?

3. What new skills have you gained on the job? Which ones do you think will be most valuable for you to carry into the future?

4. What sorts of academic courses have you taken to complement your field experience? How have you integrated coursework with field?

5. What are you missing? Whether this is academic, professional, social, or more – can you identify what would really enhance your experience?

6. Have you faced any ethical dilemmas? Keeping in mind agency confidentiality policies, discuss how you handled challenging situations.

7. Discuss your relationship with your coworkers. What have you learned from your team, and how has your understanding of workplace culture changed over time?

8. Describe your relationship with your supervisor. What are you learning from their leadership and management style? What have been the most valuable teaching moments they have shared with you?

9. How will you exit your community? Whether it is the workplace, your supervisory relationship, your relationships with coworkers, or your relationships with clients – there must be some work you will put into transitioning out of your role. Discuss how you plan to make that transition happen professionally and efficiently.

10. Major Learning Moments! When talking to colleagues who have finished a field placement - or any work experience - and have had time to reflect and process their professional experiences, they may possess a different perspective.

11. Mix the takeaways gleaned from current field students with those from students who have fully completed their field engagement. Combining these diverse perspectives allows a well-rounded understanding of the range of field opportunities one may have.

