

Transformative Perspectives in Education: Highlights from CJNSE and CCGSE Collaboration

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For the second consecutive year, The Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education (CJNSE) and the Canadian Committee of Graduate Students in Education (CCGSE) have united to bring forth a Special Issue that showcases the innovative work of Canada's graduate students in education. Stemming from some of the enlightening presentations at the 2023 CCGSE/CSSE conference, this issue aims to amplify the voices of emerging scholars, providing them with a platform where their research undergoes a rigorous peer-review process and reaches a wider academic audience.

Much of the work presented by graduate students at CCGSE/CSSE was reflective of their experiences in the current educational climate. With shifts in how we learn, a renewed emphasis on culturally responsive practices, and an overall commitment to improving student learning, this issue reflects the progressive and agentive voices of graduate students. The authors here use their personal lives to springboard their investigations into a variety of educational research.

In this special issue, we present three overarching themes that reflect current trends and concerns in educational research. The first theme, *Mental Health and Emotional Well-being in Education Settings*, explores the multifaceted impact of social media on adolescent mental health, the dynamics of shame and guilt in elementary education, and the importance of respectful engagement with graduate students during academic conference sessions.

The second theme, *Cultural Awareness and Inclusivity in Education*, traverses diverse topics such as Indigenous allyship, the role of cultural instruction in adult Indigenous language learning, the experiences of international students within Canadian higher education, and the adaptation challenges faced by Canadian students in foreign educational environments.

Our third theme, *Educational Methods and Learning Outcomes*, critically examines various pedagogical approaches. It contrasts phonics-based instruction with whole language/balanced literacy methods by exploring the merits and challenges of each approach. Additionally, this theme investigates the impact of participatory visual research as a tool for enhancing sustainable development within educational settings.

Collectively, these articles offer deep insights and propose innovative directions for enhancing educational practices, pedagogy, and policies. We are delighted to present this collection, which not only reflects the current scholarly discourse but also pushes the boundaries of conventional educational thinking.

In This Issue

This 2023 Special Issue includes nine articles:

Kaylee A. Fishback contributed a research article entitled *Social Media: Friend or Foe to Adolescents During the COVID-19 Pandemic*. In a longitudinal exploration of 351 adolescents' social media use during the pandemic, Fishback's work found significant links between higher social media use and depression, particularly among young women. The article highlights the need for mental health supports and discussions of social media behaviors in the continued wake of the post-pandemic uncertainties.

Kirsty M. Choquette contributed a research article entitled *Achievement-Related Shame and Guilt in Elementary Students: A Pilot Study*. Working with 24 Grade 5 students, participants in Choquette's study completed a low-difficulty spelling test, after which they were told they only spelled four of the ten words correctly. Participants reported feeling significantly more shame than guilt. Since shame is related to avoidance behaviors, it is important

for educators and caregivers to recognize and respond to signs of shame by emphasizing the importance of the students' effort rather than ability.

Two Graduate Students (pseudonym) contributed an open letter entitled *Eating Our Young: A Call for Civility During Q&As Following Student Conference Presentation*. In their open letter, the authors share negative experiences of graduate student research being criticized at conferences. While recognizing the importance of questioning and critical discussion in academia, the authors call on academics in education to use compassionate approaches to supporting the work of emerging scholars.

Xuechen Yuan contributed a position paper entitled *Reflections on Indigenous Allyship: Perspectives from an International Student and Emerging Scholar*. This thoughtful piece describes the journey of understanding settler's potential complicity in perpetuating Eurocentric knowledge and becoming an ally for Indigenous communities. Yuan emphasizes the need for allies, notably migrants and other settlers, to acknowledge their responsibility to disrupt colonialism, instead of being absolved from guilt as settlers themselves. The author offers readers a list of suggestions for Indigenous allyship for scholars and migrants informed by their community work experience and personal journey.

Tessa E. Troughton contributed a literature review entitled *The Role of Cultural Instruction in Adult Indigenous Language Learning*. Troughton synthesizes evidence on how culturally grounded approaches can enhance adult Indigenous language learning programs. While common models of additional language learning tend to focus on technical aspects of language, Indigenous scholars have noted that Indigenous worldviews are deeply embedded in language, signaling the importance of integrating linguistic and cultural learning. Troughton identifies areas for future research, including how culturally grounded approaches can support Anishinaabemowin language teaching and learning.

Shamiga Arumuhathas contributed a position paper entitled *Navigating Perspectives: Unpacking the Discourse Surrounding International Student Experiences in Canadian Higher Education*. This paper analyzes the evolving policies in Canadian higher education and their impact on the perception of international students of color. It examines the negative consequences of viewing these students through a deficit lens, highlighting issues such as culture shock, social integration challenges, inadequate support, and difficulty in forming new relationships. Arumuhathas further suggests alternative approaches to improve the experiences of international students and enhance the support and resources provided by Canadian universities.

Shuai Yu contributed a research article entitled *Promoting Canadian Student Outbound Mobility: Analysis of Internationalization Policies*. Analyzing policy and strategies at the national, provincial, and institutional levels, Yu outlines practices that support outbound student mobility - such as financial support, establishing partnerships, and recognized benefits - as well as ways to refine and develop more comprehensive systems to track trends and learning outcomes for students studying abroad.

Theresa Engel-Wood contributed a literature review entitled *Uses of Phonics-Based and Whole Language/Balanced Literacy Tools in Teaching Reading: How Does the Evidence Support Student Success in the Classroom?*. Engel-Wood seeks to address the long-standing debate regarding the efficacy of phonics-based instruction versus whole language/balanced literacy instruction in fostering proficient readers. This review dispels misconceptions about these teaching methods, presents arguments and evidence from both sides of the debate, and explains how this research can be applied in classrooms. Additionally, Engel-Wood highlights existing gaps in both the research and in teachers' comprehension of these methods.

Midhat Noor Kiyani contributed a literature review entitled *Breaking Down Barriers: Exploring the Potential of Participatory Visual Research to Promote University Students' Active Participation in Sustainable Development Initiatives*. Kiyani explores how participatory visual research (PVR) might be used to bolster data collection methods, discussions, and research dissemination around sustainable education. Specifically, PVR can allow participants further opportunities to express their engagement, rethink agency and power relationships, as well as challenge tacit assumptions that may distance them from sustainability initiatives.

Acknowledgments

CJNSE rests on the shoulders of many devoted scholars. We are grateful to the ones who contributed to this issue. We also extend our sincere appreciation for the work of the CCGSE executive teams, past and present, and in particular the tireless efforts of our program co-chairs.

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Cameron W. Smith, BA, BEd, MA: Cam Smith is a PhD Candidate at the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa. With a background in teaching elementary French as a Second Language (FSL), Cam's research explores intersections of teacher education, professional learning, FSL, and educational technology. Cam's SSHRC-funded doctoral research explores the use of digital technology by elementary FSL teachers, and the development of a community of practice to support innovation.

Amanda Battistuzzi, BA, OCT, MEd: Amanda is a PhD Candidate at the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa. She is a proud Core French teacher whose teaching experiences span all elementary grades. Her doctoral research explores language learner turned language teacher identity development for the purposes of developing

Aide Chen, PhD: Aide Chen recently completed his PhD degree in Applied Linguistics at Western University, Canada. His research interests include critical applied linguistics, TESOL, language teacher education, language teacher emotions and identities, as well as reflexive approaches to multilingual and multicultural education. His PhD research explores the early-career anxiety and resilience experiences of English as an Additional Language (EAL) teachers in post-pandemic times.

Nathan Rickey, BMus, BEd, MEd: Nathan Rickey is a PhD Candidate studying classroom assessment at the Faculty of Education, Queen's University. Emerging from his experiences as a high school English teacher, his research focuses on the psychosocial mechanisms of student self-assessment.