Improving Education in Canada:
Advancing Pedagogies and Inclusion

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We at the Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education (CJNSE) are privileged to showcase the work of new scholars who, in our Fall 2024 Issue, emphasize a shared commitment to improving education in Canada. Together, these authors articulate a recognition of the importance of education in students' lives and the well-being of societies and communities. In particular, the collection of articles in this issue, which include research articles, literature reviews, position papers, and book reviews, aims to support the improvement of education systems through advancing pedagogies and inclusion.

Pedagogies include philosophies and systematic practices, underpinned by theories of learning, aimed at developing specific learning outcomes. Authors who contributed to this issue explored impacts and implications of various pedagogies across a range of disciplines and contexts, illuminating important findings for practice. Similarly, the authors examined factors which can limit and support inclusion in schools and beyond, elucidating the role of schools in promoting learning and belonging for all. Our authors drew on a range of theoretical perspectives and approaches, including critical theories and psychological approaches. As Editors, we are grateful for these contributions which stand to guide researchers, educators, and policymakers to a better future for education in Canada.

In This Issue

This Spring 2024 issue includes 22 articles:

Lisa Anderson contributed a literature review entitled *How Can Educators Motivate and Support Upper-Elementary and Middle School Singers?* Anderson synthesizes empirical studies of the factors that affect and strategies that support students' motivation to participate in singing. Barriers include the onset of puberty, social pressures, and student beliefs about talent, while supports included individual and targeted vocal support, supportive learning environments, and opportunities for students to select repertoire. Anderson calls for future research to examine how these factors shift across diverse groups of students.

Toyosi Bamgboye contributed a literature review entitled *Transitional Experience of International Students from African Countries Studying in Canada: A Systematic Literature Review*. Bamgboye synthesizes evidence about the transition experiences of African students moving to study in Canada, including barriers and supportive factors. Bamgboye identifies four key factor groups—academic adjustment, institutional support, social-related concerns, and geographical location—and discusses key supports that are needed for African students studying in Canada.

Florence Croguennec contributed a literature review entitled *Exploring the Intricacies of Differentiated Instruction: Problem-Solving through the Multiagenda Model*. Drawing on explicitation interviews with four teachers and analysis of teachers' gestures, Croguennec identifies strategies for adapting instruction to students' needs, including atmosphere, steering of tasks, and scaffolding, that facilitate inclusive problem-solving. Croguennec argues that teachers could benefit from reimagining ways to support inclusive problem-solving and identifies current approaches as centering on creating supportive, collaborative learning environments that promote student engagement.

Laura DeGraff contributed a literature review entitled *Literature Review: Social-Emotional Learning in Educational Drama*. DeGraff synthesizes current research at the intersection of social-emotional development and educational drama and identifies numerous positive impacts of relevant pedagogies, including enhanced sense of self and collaboration skills. DeGraff discusses areas for future study and practical implications aimed at facilitating social-emotional development in drama education, including the need for training for program facilitators.

Aimee Edmunds contributed a research article entitled *Considering Indigenous Perspectives in the Teaching and Learning of Mathematics: A Review of Literature*. Edmunds synthesizes scholarship to provide guidance to mathematics teachers related to integrating Indigenous perspectives. Edmunds notes that mathematics is closely linked to culture and asserts that teachers can consider the interconnectedness between math, people, place and land. Edmunds suggests future research to support culturally responsive mathematics education and expand educators' conceptions of mathematics in ways that disrupt the prevalence of colonial conceptualizations.

Kara Flanagan contributed a book review entitled *A Book Review of John Dewey's* Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education. Flanagan summarizes Dewey's philosophies, i.e., social life, growth and direction, social aims in education, and interest in discipline. Flanagan concludes with a brief discussion of how these philosophies relate to current educational contexts.

Rong Fu contributed a research article entitled *Exploring K–12 Teachers' Assessment Literacy and Self-Efficacy in China*. Using data from a questionnaire, Fu investigated the relationship

between self-efficacy in assessment and teachers' assessment literacy—i.e., their capacity to use assessment to support student learning in context—in China. Fu found that assessment literacy impacted various aspects of teachers' self-efficacy and that the relationship between assessment literacy and self-efficacy was more pronounced in some types of teachers. Fu concludes with cross-cultural insights for supporting teachers' professional development in assessment.

Sam Matychuk contributed a research article entitled *Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Design for Learning: Incorporating Critical Race Theory, Queer Theory, and Indigenous Pedagogies into Universal Design for Learning.* Leveraging data from an online survey and a mixed methods design, Matychuk critically examined Universal Design for Learning through perspectives of Critical Race Theory, Queer Theory, and Indigenous pedagogies. The findings signal the need for a more inclusive learning design, which Matychuk proposes in an expanded framework called *Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Design for Learning (EDIDL).*

Will Milner contributed a research article entitled *Enhancing Student Psychological Well-Being in Secondary Outdoor Education*. Milner examines New Brunswick high school Outdoor Education teachers' perceptions of self and well-being in the contexts of their classrooms, using a participatory action research approach. The findings signal the importance of prioritizing aspects of self-determination theory throughout a progression of teaching and learning, as well as the importance of managing relationships, selecting activities, fostering challenge, and careful use of course time in facilitating outdoor education.

Sasha Nandlal and Tess Miller contributed a literature review entitled *Connecting the Dots: Inclusive Education in Canada and Trinidad and Tobago*. The authors synthesize evidence of the emerging evidence of Canada's influence on inclusive education in Trinidad and Tobago which points to tertiary-level resources for systemic improvement. The authors highlight issues and areas for future research related to inclusive education.

Justin Patrick, Daniel Patrick, and Oleksii Zahreba contributed a research article entitled *Voter Turnout Analysis of Canadian Undergraduate Student Unions, 2016-2018*. The authors analyzed election turnouts of campus student unions from Canadian publicly funded universities for the 2016, 2017, and 2018 academic years, including indicators of higher turnout, such as online voting systems and percentage of part-time students. Findings indicate that student union voter turnouts are generally low, and that online voting systems have a significant impact on increasing voter turnout. The authors discuss strategies for enhancing student union voter turnout based on these findings.

Suye Qi and Yanni Guo contributed a research article entitled *A Survey of Hong Kong's Putonghua Teaching in a Primary and Secondary School from the Perspective of Cultural Identity*.

Qi and Guo explore how Putonghua education influences cultural identity among Hong Kong students under the "biliterate and trilingual" policy. They identify key factors affecting cultural identity, including family environment, interpersonal interactions, school education, social values, and social culture. The authors discuss the importance of balancing Cantonese and Putonghua in education to foster bilingualism and recommend strategies to enhance Putonghua teaching while preserving local cultural roots.

Wenting Rong and Mohammed Estaiteyeh contributed a literature review entitled *Digital Literacy in Canadian Classrooms: A Systematic Review of Teachers' Professional Development Programs*. Rong and Estaiteyeh examine the incorporation of digital literacy in Canadian teachers' professional development programs from 2012 to 2023, guided by Belshaw's 8Cs model. They identify gaps in addressing the creative, cultural, and civic aspects of digital literacy while highlighting the cognitive, constructive, confident, and critical elements. The authors emphasize the need for more holistic strategies to empower Canadian educators in fostering digital literacy across these domains.

Anthony Abbot Sangmen, Desmond Oklikah Ofori, and George Fiifi Botchey contributed a literature review entitled *Black Students in Canada's Higher Education System: A Systematic Literature Review*. The authors synthesize empirical evidence on the experiences of Black students in Canada's higher education system, recognizing that Black students are not a homogenous group. The authors report on themes of general lived educational experiences, discrimination, unbalanced power relations, and Black students' subjective well-being, as well as coping strategies reported by Black students. The authors conclude with policy recommendations based on their review.

Rachel Scotland contributed a literature review entitled *Amplifying Voices: Representing Marginalized Students in Data Use and Reporting*. Scotland examines how marginalized students are represented in educational data, addressing disparities faced by groups such as racialized students, those with disabilities, LGBTQ+ students, and students from low-income or limited English proficiency backgrounds. Scotland emphasizes the importance of integrating student stories and qualitative data into analysis, moving beyond standardized scores to ensure equitable representation. Recommendations include using data from marginalized groups to guide decision-making, combining statistics with context, and fostering inclusive practices across classrooms, schools, and educational systems.

Laura Taylor contributed a literature review entitled *Addressing Teacher Disengagement*. The review highlights the emotional dimensions of teaching, the impact of educational reforms, and the challenges of retaining qualified teachers. Taylor emphasizes the importance of addressing the moral and ethical responsibilities of the teaching profession, improving working conditions, and supporting teachers' emotional well-being to reduce attrition rates and sustain the teaching workforce.

Cameron Telch contributed a position paper entitled Forgotten Men: *An International Comprehensive Documentary on Remembering the Horrors of the Great War*. Telch examines the 1933 anti-war documentary *Forgotten Men*, which captures the experiences of First World War soldiers to convey the catastrophic realities of war. Telch highlights the film's authentic portrayal of frontline combat and its pedagogical value in promoting historical empathy and peace education. The review underscores the documentary's relevance as a tool for teaching the futility of war and the sacrifices of the Lost Generation, advocating for its use in contemporary classrooms.

Montanna Tries, Jenny Richmond-Bravo, and Nicole Kaniki contributed a literature review entitled *Exploring Trends in BIPOC Student Engagement: A Review of the Literature*. The authors investigate factors influencing student engagement (SE) among Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) students in higher education, particularly those who are first-generation or international students. The authors highlight three key themes, including the representation of BIPOC faculty, challenges with on-campus and off-campus work, and complexities related to commuting. Recommendations include increasing BIPOC faculty mentorship, improving pay equity for on-campus jobs, and enhancing support for commuter students to address systemic barriers and foster equitable engagement.

Vedrana Vodopivec contributed a literature review entitled *A Review of Studies Exploring Negative Effects of Digital Technology on Student Learning, Academic Performance, and Class Participation*. Vodopivec examines the unintended consequences of digital technology in classrooms, particularly cell phones, iPads, and computers. The review identifies negative impacts, including distractions, reduced focus, impaired information retention, and lower academic performance. Vodopivec emphasizes the need for clear policies and balanced approaches to integrating technology into education, advocating for responsible use to maximize learning outcomes.

Le Vy Vu and Nimali Weerasinghe contributed a research study entitled *Social Media in English Learning and Teaching: A Duoethnography*. Vu and Weerasinghe examine the integration of social media in English language teaching through collaborative dialogues reflecting their teaching experiences in Vietnam and Sri Lanka. They identify three key themes: hesitancy in using social media as a learning tool, the prominence of Facebook as an educational platform, and learners' attitudes towards social media in classrooms. The authors propose that while social media offers opportunities for engagement and learner autonomy, it requires clear objectives, teacher facilitation, and monitoring to ensure effective use in language education.

Jasmine Walkey contributed a literature review entitled *The Impact of Explicit Phonics Instruction on Emergent Literacy*. Walkey examines the role of explicit phonics instruction in early years education and its impact on emergent literacy skills. The review highlights the benefits of

systematic phonics instruction, including improved grapheme-phoneme correspondence and phonemic awareness, while emphasizing the importance of teacher training and professional development. Walkey also identifies the potential of technology-supported phonics programs and advocates for balanced literacy practices that integrate phonics with authentic literature and multimodal learning experiences.

Alex Yankey and Tess Miller contributed a research article entitled *Mathematics Teachers' Practices and Perceptions of Excluding Students from Participating in Large-scale Assessments*. Yankey and Miller investigate the perspectives and practices of Canadian mathematics teachers regarding the inclusion and exclusion of students in large-scale assessments (LSAs). They highlight variability in exclusion practices, including hesitancy to exclude students with intellectual or socio-emotional disabilities and inconsistency in addressing "grey areas" like behavioural issues or grade-level gaps. Recommendations include clarifying exclusion guidelines and addressing social promotion to reduce selection bias in LSA participation rates.

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About the Authors

Nathan Rickey, MEd: Nathan Rickey, the Managing Editor of CJNSE, 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.

Aurra Startup, MA: Aurra Startup is a PhD student in the Education department at York University. With a solid commitment to social justice, Aurra's research centers on the challenges and possibilities of implementing restorative justice in schools. She currently serves as the Associate Editor for CJNSE and is passionate about demystifying the publishing process with fellow graduate students. Beyond her scholarly pursuits, Aurra actively engages in the non-profit sector through her commitment to creating brave space programs to de-stigmatize topics such as mental health and foster strong relationships with BIPOC Muslims. Her dedication to social justice and educational equity seeks to create a bridge between her scholarly pursuits and community activist work.