

July 9th 2016, Atlantic Education Graduate Student Conference
Oral Presentation Abstracts

Keynote: Dr. Roger Saul

Competition, Scarcity, and Silos: Graduate Student Antagonisms and the Consolations of Community

Acute challenges characterize graduate student experiences in today's North American universities. For all of the deep and enduring rewards that entry into a life of scholarship can offer students, there exists alongside these an intensifying set of antagonisms. To claim the identity of 'graduate student' is increasingly to be made to act within a structure of competition, scarcity, and siloed approaches to scholarship, a structure arguably antithetical to the best iterations and expressions of graduate student research, thinking and writing. This talk binds the empirical with the suggestive. It first draws on an emerging body of research to substantiate claims about the changing nature of graduate student life. It next sets out in search of a consolation amidst these changes – and settles on the idea of community, or, rather, of finding experiences of community in places one might not necessarily expect.

Session #1 – Health and Well-being

Chair: Dr. Ann Sherman

Lisa Weber

Policies, Beliefs and Practices of High School Inclusion: A Review of the Literature

Successfully implementing inclusion at the high school level is considerably different from elementary and intermediate levels (Carpenter & Dyal, 2007; Scanlon & Baker, 2012). Secondary inclusion poses unique challenges such as a rigorous and fast-paced curriculum, high stakes testing, and students with poor study skills (Casale-Giannola, 2012; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2001; McKenna, Muething, Flower, Pedrotty, & Bryant, 2015). As a result, high school students with learning exceptionalities continue to struggle (Sabornie & deBettencourt, 2009), educators and administrators are often unprepared for these unique challenges to inclusion (Dieker, 2007), and research guiding high school faculty is rare (Byrnes, 2008). The authors have conducted a review of the North American high school inclusion literature, located 28 articles, summarized the findings, and have suggested recommendations for current high school faculty in order to inform current high school inclusive teaching practices and to encourage further research in this often overlooked area of inclusion.

Keywords: inclusion, high school, administrators, policy, attitudes

Jenny Rowett & Kody Carlson

Mindfulness in Education: Narratives of University Students Who Have Completed a Course in Mindfulness

Research continues to support the inclusion of mindfulness-based practices in post-secondary education. However, very little research exists on students' experiences during and following enrollment in a mindfulness-based course. For the past three years, *Mindfulness*, was created and offered at two different faculties within the University of New Brunswick. This fourth year elective has attracted students from numerous faculties and all levels: Undergraduate, Master, PhD, and Alumni. This study explored the experiences of five participants, utilizing narrative inquiry and thematic analysis. Themes included community, health, mindfulness-based practices, self-compassion, and spirituality. This research explored two questions: (1) How did students' practices of mindfulness and self-compassion develop throughout the course? (2) How do mindfulness and self-compassion impact students' daily and long term self-care and management of stress?

Keywords: community, mindfulness, pedagogy, self-compassion.

Junot Castelyn

Batterer Intervention Programs: Do they really work?

Despite growing public awareness in the last three decades of the problem of intimate partner violence, specifically perpetrated by men towards their female partners, it remains a vexing social and public health problem (Murphy & Ting, 2010; Babcock, Green & Robie, 2004). Researchers are still divided on whether group batterer intervention programs (BIPs), produce consistent results and provide conclusive evidence of efficacy and effectiveness (Eckhardt, Murphy, Black, & Suhr, 2006).

This session will review relevant literature on BIPs for violence perpetrated by men and will reference a qualitative research initiative using ethnographic interviews to investigate offender experiences of a BIP offered in New Brunswick. The program, which has been running for over 20 years, focuses on self-awareness and understanding of male aggression to prevent intimate partner and family violence. The information provided aims to educate mental health professionals and researchers to familiarise them with recent findings on this topic.

Keywords: Domestic violence, batterer intervention, groups, effectiveness

Session #1 – **Transgender and Sexual knowledges**

Chair: Dr. Roger Saul

Rebecca Ward

Transition Ambitions & Conversion Aversion: A Foray into the Ethical Considerations of LGBTQ Clients

The research presented is a literary review of the ethical considerations related to working with LGBTQ clients in counselling practice who are seeking conversion therapy or who wish to transition. The *Ethical Decision-Making Model* of the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (2015) was employed to demonstrate the potential options and consequences of both treatment requests. Since LGBTQ persons have an increased incidence of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation, presenting up to a 53% greater risk (Moody et al., 2015), determining best ethical practice in counselling with these clients can be highly dependent on counsellor competence within the LGBTQ domain. This presentation examines how current research can influence and guide the ethical decision-making process by enhancing counsellor competence regarding: potential dilemmas between client autonomy and nonmaleficence (doing no harm), risks and benefits of treatment and non-treatment, legal limitations, and the use of affirmative counselling in support of client self-determinism.

Keywords: LGBTQ, counselling, ethics, best practices, competence

Amelia Thorpe

Teaching Trans: Using Language to Unpack the Pathologisation of Gender Identity

Current debate surrounding trans rights, trans education, and the requisite steps towards the recognition and affirmation of trans identities is complicated by the pervasive pathologisation of gender identity. Trans identities are systematically interrogated and delegitimized in everyday life, socially excluded, and denied access to essential social services. This presentation explores the ways in which the dominant, medicalized language of gender identity complicates current issues in trans advocacy and education. To address the systemic erasure of trans existence and experiences, one must explore the ways in which physical flesh and bone are categorized, labeled, and interpreted. These socially constructed understandings of the body are produced through social and historical subjection, and upheld through language and the dominant discourse of gender. Trans bodies have become highly politicized and there remains great resistance to understanding trans and non-binary identities as anything but biologically 'broken', thus requiring treatment. This pathologisation contributes to the social preoccupation with biological gender and gender-confirming surgeries, which impedes effective communication between trans advocates and educators, and dominates education surrounding trans identities. Addressing the 'medicalisation of trans' and the language of gender is an important first step towards the inclusion and affirmation of trans identities and the development of accurate and accessible education on gender identity in a wide range of contexts.

Cleo Gallant

Ageism and the Oppression of Youth: The Denial and Obfuscation of Sexual Knowledge

My research aims to investigate how education and youth-studies discourses, including developmental theory, the myth of the sexually self-destructive young, and Victorian sentiments of appropriate dialogue, influence sex education curriculum composition and deliverance. I will argue that these discourses and discourse conveyers are an example of ageism through the neglect of youth demands for sex education to include varying topics on desire, pleasure, and positive sexuality. The rejection of youth autonomy and power in the configuration of their own education, due to the socially constructed belief that the young are inferior to adults in decision making and emotional intelligence, constitutes discrimination and the oppression of a right to knowledge. My methodology will include Foucauldian discourse analysis and critical document analysis, while using a reoccurring examination of the fable of the delivery stork as an example of a seemingly innocent, yet indefensible, initial denial and obfuscation of knowledge.

Keywords: ageism, power dynamics, sex education, curriculum, sexual discourse

Session #1 – Languages and New Comers

Chair: Jennie Howatt

Kate Hsiao Yu Liu

Economic Immigrant-Parents' Educational Involvement in Prince Edward Island

To address the issues of aging population and economic development, Canada continually recruit economic-immigrants in recent decades. These immigrants choose Canada because of its education systems and services for children, and they also eagerly engage in education after landing in Canada. This study investigated economic-immigrants' parental involvement in education in Prince Edward Island, Canada. Informed by Epstein's Parental Involvement Framework, McNeil and Coleman's Social Capital Theory, this research adopted a qualitative research design to understand economic immigrants' experiences and perception in Canadian public schools. Data analysis revealed primary information sources for immigrants, as well as challenges and requests calling to inform their educational involvement. The immigrants hold high expectations for their children, and involve themselves in home-based learning and parent-teacher communications. However, they lack opportunities entering the leadership roles and not engage in community collaboration due to language barriers and culture differences. Recommendations were included for educators and future studies.

Karla Culligan

Using Classroom-Based Research to Explore Mathematics and Language Learning in Secondary Immersion

Through this study, I aim to better understand how bilingual mathematics students use and attend to both language and mathematics. Drawing from sociocultural theory, I focus on the social nature of language learning (Vygotsky, 1978) and view mathematics as a situated, social activity (Moschkovich, 2007). Two classes of Grade 9 French immersion students, and their classroom teacher, participated in the study. In this presentation, I describe my experiences and the rich data elicited while engaging with learners and their teacher in this classroom-based research. Audio recordings of students' interactions, interviews, student artefacts, my involvement with the classes, and collaborative work with the teacher have all allowed me to gain a deep perspective on students' language and mathematics learning. I present preliminary results of a discourse analysis (Gee, 2014) exploring language-related episodes (Swain & Lapkin, 1998) and mathematical communication (Barwell, 2009), and describe future directions of the study.

Keywords: classroom-based research, second language education, mathematics education, sociocultural theory

Mary MacPhee

Experiences of Non-francophone Parents who have Children in Francophone Schools

This research investigates the experience of non-francophone (NF) parents in Atlantic Canada who have chosen a minority French school for their children. The study addresses gaps in the literature by looking beyond exogamous couples (Cormier & Lowe, 2010; Rocque, 2006) and illuminating diverse types of NF parents that are present. These findings drawn from recent dissertation data collection explore the educational beliefs, experiences, and involvement of NF parents. Parental involvement in children's education is important for academic and social achievement generally (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Epstein, 2011; Jeynes, 2007, 2010; Weiss, Buffard, Bridgall, & Gordon, 2009) and in minority contexts particularly (CMEC, 2003; Landry, Allard & Deveau, 2010). Changing demographics in minority French schools across Canada mean a growing number of parents of children in these schools do not have French proficiency (CMEC, 2003; Landry, 2010; Author, Turnbull, Gauthier, Cormier & Miller, 2013). It is crucial to understand the role of the NF parent in the French minority language school context to enhance the success of the students and the schools, inform policy and practice, and maintain vibrant French linguistic and culturally-rich communities. Theory and models from parental involvement (Epstein, 2011; Hoover-Dempsey, 2011; Hornby, 2011) and minority French education and revitalisation (Landry & Allard, 2006; Landry, 2010) informed the study. The mixed methods research design included 13 focus group interviews involving 43 parent participants and an online survey with just over 100 participants.

Session #2 – Leadership

Chair: Joe Blades

Katharine Bartlett

Professional Development, Expectations, and Coaching: One School's Approach to Strengthening Balanced Literacy Instruction

In 2014 the Nunavut Department of Education announced the adoption of a balanced literacy approach in kindergarten through grade 8, and in 2015/2016 a Learning Coach position was added to each school to help “teachers improve their literacy instruction” (Sponagle, 2015). Research suggests that while professional development may increase teacher knowledge, it does not necessarily result in changes to teacher practice. Using an action research methodology, this paper will describe how one school combined on-going professional development, administrator expectations, and support from a coach, in their efforts to strengthen the use of balanced literacy practices. Pre- and post- teacher surveys, interviews, and document analysis will consider the effectiveness of this approach and suggest practices that others schools may wish to adopt.

Keywords: Inuit education, balanced literacy, professional development, action research

Karma Dema

Exploring the Narratives of Female Educational Leaders in Bhutan

In my research I explore the narratives of female educational leaders in Bhutan, I adopted a narrative inquiry paradigm (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). The examination of the personal experiences of female education leaders in Bhutan is at the heart of this research. The primary question guiding my research is: what are the narratives of female educational leaders in Bhutan? A secondary question is: what are the challenges and opportunities of female educational leaders in Bhutan? Fifteen female educational leaders from seven different districts in Bhutan were selected using snowball sampling and interviewed for an hour or more. The diversity of participants has contributed significantly in making the study rich and powerful. Five broad themes emerged from the data. In this presentation I share two themes that reveal the status of Bhutanese female educational leaders in Bhutan. These include the effects of gender on leadership styles and the fact that many felt they were inadvertent leaders.

Key Words: Female educational leaders, gender effects on leadership

Ross Leadbetter

Team Learning and Knowledge Creation: Planning for Succession Planning

With the ever-increasing rate of retirement in our worlds of work, the need to pass down critical tacit knowledge from one generation to the next is reaching a crisis level. We seemingly do not have the tools to answer this need effectively, and on the scale required. A manual is not enough, and virtual learning provides only the predicate knowledge necessary to begin higher order thinking. With Knowledge Creation Theory and four inductively coded Orientations of Effective Teams as the conceptual framework of this research, grounded in a Critical Realist Philosophy, the hope of team learning and knowledge creation is explored.

Session #2 – Philosophy and Ethics

Chair: Sasha Wood

Sarah M. Johnson

Logging On: A Review of the Practice, Procedures & Ethical Considerations of Electronic Counselling Services

In the current culture of pervasive digital connectivity, online communication has arguably become as second-nature as having a conversation in person. A recent global survey of digital attitudes and behaviours indicated that 69% of respondents believe digital exchanges are replacing face-to-face interactions, and 76% of respondents say they enjoy the freedom of being connected anywhere, anytime (The Nielsen Company, 2015). Accordingly, electronic counselling (e-counselling) services are rapidly growing in popularity among various client populations (Martin et al., 2015). This review of recent academic literature will present findings regarding the practice of e-counselling, including trends in usage, risks and benefits, procedural considerations, and ethical issues impacting how e-counselling services are facilitated in Canada. We aim to increase knowledge and explore pertinent ethical issues, so as to stimulate critical thinking and dialogue, and provide suggestions of procedures to maintain best practice and ethical integrity when delivering e-counselling services.

Keywords: E-counselling; online; therapy; ethics; best practice

Samuel LeBlanc

Teaching by Examples in the Search for Intellectually Virtuous Students

Examples illustrate ideas. For example, in *Cultivating Good Minds* (2015) Baehr invites readers to think of students or individuals, real and fictitious, who exemplify intellectual virtues. Using Davis's philosophy of education method of research by examples (2010), I develop the analytical consequences of applying this method in Baehr's case, and virtue epistemology in general. While examples can justify a concept, they also open the door to counter examples, which can jeopardize the understanding of the same concept, even invalidate it; and yet, examples remain educational. If Baehr does not justify his uses of examples, by adding Davis's method and heeding to Sanders' (2006) critiques, I argue that a more robust theory of the virtuous student should explicitly account for the method of examples, and accommodate—as examples—individuals as the iconoclast Diogenes the Cynic, to the heroically inspiring Pakistani student Malala Yousafzai.

Keywords: intellectual virtues, philosophy of education, examples.

Kristijana Kiki Tanfara

Student Perspectives on Receiving Tertiary Level Positive Behaviour Support Within Inclusive High School Environments

The proposed study will investigate the experiences of three adolescent youth with significant emotional behavioural challenges receiving tertiary level of positive behavior intervention support (PBIS) within an inclusive secondary school setting. Perspectives will be recorded as semi-structured interviews and analyzed using an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) method. Research shows that implementing PBIS promotes appropriate behavior development among students within a positive learning environment (Flannery, et al., 2014; Feuerborn, Wallace & Tyre, 2013). Students struggling with learning appropriate conduct may require a wraparound system of intensive and individualized behavior supports in order to succeed in high school (Lane, et al., 2013). This presentation will examine the effect of NB education system's inclusion policies and PBIS frameworks on this student population. The study will be important to the field of behavior support research and education because it will provide student perspectives—largely missing from the literature--on the efficacy of implementing PBIS in an inclusive provincial high school.

Keywords: Inclusion, Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS), tertiary support, phenomenology.

Session #2 – Grad Student Parenting & Ethnocultural Diversities

Chair: Dr. Lyle Hamm

Kerem Doğurğa & Sherrie Doğurğa

Refrigerator Graffiti @EmilyCarrU: An (Auto)Ethno&graphic Re/view of Nomadic Subjectivities Within one Transnational Family

With increasing globalization, the number of multi-ethnic transnational families is increasing (Sigad & Eisikovits, 2010). This paper is a shared (auto)ethno&graphic re/view of encounters between one Canadian international school teacher and her Turkish son. Avoiding the pitfalls of nostalgia, we together trace our perceptions of early transnational experiences at linguistic, cultural, gender intersections, in school and at home. Designed as excerpts from ongoing conversations, we re/view old and new photos, early and recent art/ifacts from our family time together in Turkey and Canada. Re/membered are private discussions about graffiti on the refrigerator in the year 2000 to public tweets and facebook posts about appearing in a 2016 UK Vogue. We re/call our former public and private subjectivities as we shift toward continually becoming academics (Braidotti, 2013; Brogden, 2010) in Canada. There are multiple shared border crossings into critical feminist material studies as a PhD student at the University of New Brunswick and making practices of an IB undergraduate student of design at Emily Carr University. This paper contributes to the understanding of cross-border relationships within transnational families.

Keywords: globalization, Third Culture Kid, subjectivity, transnational family, culture, critical feminism, becoming

Brittany Jakubiec

Balancing Parenthood and Graduate Studies: A Canadian Perspective

In Canadian universities, academics that are parents face numerous barriers and challenges (Jakubiec, 2015; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012), including negative attitudes and perceptions, struggling to attain work-life balance (Allen, 2013), and limited opportunities for advancement and promotion. To counterbalance the challenges and struggles there are very few supports for academic parents. Thus, if this is the state of academic parenthood in positions such as professor, dean, and vice president (Jakubiec, 2015), then what is the state of academic parenthood for graduate students in Canadian universities? The purpose of the current quantitative research is to gain a better understanding of parenthood in graduate studies, specifically in Canadian universities. A survey with closed- and open-ended questions will be distributed to graduate student parents across Canada and results will be analyzed using NVivo and SPSS. At AEGSC in July 2016, the researcher will present preliminary findings and recommendations based on the results.

Keywords: graduate students, parenthood, challenges, barriers

Matthew Maston

Perceptions and Roles of Educators in an Ethnoculturally Diverse School

Ethnocultural diversity is increasing in New Brunswick. Global immigration patterns coupled with the government of New Brunswick's promotion of immigration has led to this increase. Traditionally, New Brunswick has been a predominantly white province with few visible minorities. The focus of this presentation is a proposed research study, which asks: How do teachers and school administrators of one ethnoculturally diverse school in urban New Brunswick perceive increasing ethnocultural diversity? Expanding on this question, this proposed research study will seek to understand attitudes teachers and administrators hold in regards to ethnocultural diversity, the roles these teachers and administrators perceive themselves to have within an ethnoculturally diverse school, and how prepared and supported these educators perceive themselves to be for increasing ethnocultural diversity within their school.

Session #3 – Music, Pro-Environmental Education and Peace Building

Chair: Sandra Elliot

Carolyn Wagner

Digital Gamification in Private Music Education

Video gaming provides an intense immersive experience with instantaneous feedback and clear goals. Playing the piano is another activity where flow frequently occurs. This researcher used phenomenological inquiry to investigate students' experiences of flow in piano practice and video gaming. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) identified flow as a feeling of total immersion and creativity where challenge and skill are balanced and high. Personal interviews revealed that student attitudes about who is judging their playing, students' perceptions of personal autonomy, and sources of sensory stimuli all affect time spent in flow during piano practice. Video games, which are created to induce flow, draw on the attention and time of teens whose academic and musical goals may be in conflict with the amount of time they spend gaming. The ultimate aim of this research is to discover how digital technology might be incorporated into individual instrumental practice to increase young musicians' flow experience.

Amanda Ann Legace

Promoting Pro-environmental Behavior

The primary goal of environmental education is to promote pro-environmental behavior. Unfortunately, this goal is essentially absent from the New Brunswick curriculum as the majority of its topics focus on global climate change. Environmental education is usually learned from a textbook and inside a classroom. Unintentionally, this promotes a desensitization and disengagement from the environment for students. The literature shows there are many variables and a variety of contexts that contribute to promote proenvironmental behavior. The two main variables of focus chosen for this research were internal locus of control (ILOC) and environmental agency (EA). A Case Study was conducted in a rural New Brunswick public high school. A two-week unit that centered around an important community watershed was carefully created in order to promote ILOC and EA. Community based learning was the vehicle in which the curriculum and opportunities for students to develop ILOC and EA were delivered in hopes of promoting pro-environmental behavior.

Keywords: pro-environmental behavior, internal locus of control, environmental agency, environmental education, case study.

Lawrence D. Blake

Learning and Peacebuilding: Canadian Soldiers and Critical Citizenship Education

Following through on an election promise, the Liberal Government began the process to airlift 30,000 Syrian refugees from the Middle East to Canada in late 2015. February of 2016 marked the completion of the goal; whole-of-government partners, working on Operation PROVISION, succeeded in the relocation of over 30,000 asylum-seekers fleeing conflict. Part of that contingent was comprised of Canadian service members, working both domestically and abroad to meet the new government's intent.

This presentation will look at lesson plans and training conducted by the CAF in preparation for the arrival of refugee families. It will explore issues surrounding peacekeeping, and the necessity for the development of critical-leaders amongst the officers and enlisted of forces providing troops. Building upon personal experiences and case-studies, the paper will argue that soldiers deploying on humanitarian missions must be prepared to critically engage with both host nations and diverse communities in a manner that is not addressed through traditional combat training. Central to this argument is the awareness that the confluence of trauma and displacement shape the operating environment, necessitating a responsibility to engage with competing worldviews in a critical fashion.

Session #3 – **Aboriginal Knowledges**

Chair: Samuel LeBlanc

Jasmin Stoffer

The Importance of Culturally Safe Assessment Tools for Inuit Students

There are still no major assessment and diagnostic tools that educators in Nunavik can use to authentically measure our Inuit students' learning. Cultural safety as it is defined in New Zealand educational research (MacFarlane, Cavanagh, Glynn, Bateman 2007, BinSallik 2003) helps teacher and student create a classroom community that encourages the appreciation of culture, worldview, and ultimately creates success as defined by the culture and community of the students. Modern day assessment tools used with Inuit students must also conform to this notion of cultural safety in order to ensure the equity and authenticity of their results. My paper focuses on present research in culturally safe assessment tools and offers potential suggestions of where these tools and the educators using them can begin in order to accurately portray an Inuit student's learning abilities.

Keywords: Inuit, education, culture, safety, assessment

Chris George

Rebuilding the Longhouse: Creating Space for Indigenous Wisdom and Ways of Knowing

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission offers guiding principles for returning to a nation-to-nation relationship and identifies re-vitalizing Indigenous knowledges, languages and worldviews as tools of decolonization as a starting point. Reconciliation requires solidarity and direct political action from settler society and their governments. Indigenous societies worldwide are re-establishing holistic, intergenerational growth using Indigenous wisdom and ways of knowing. In partial fulfillment of the Master Philosophy (MPHIL) Policy Studies my thesis will explore the impact of settler colonialism on Indigenous societies and share insights from various Indigenous perspectives on re-establishing a nation-to-nation relationship. The Mi'gmaw-Wolastoqey Center (MWC) at the University of New Brunswick provides a place for Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers to connect the wisdom of Indigenous knowledge keepers with students, service providers and policy makers. MWC has provided this researcher with a safe and empowering place to recover and revitalize Indigenous languages, knowledge systems and worldviews in my own territory.

Dianne Wilkins**Why Public Schools Fail First Nation Students: A Critical Policy Analysis**

This presentation will provide a chronology of legislation and policy that has influenced First Nation education nationally and in the Province of New Brunswick. With targeted efforts to address educational disparities, we remain unsuccessful in rectifying the academic underachievement and high dropout rates of First Nation students attending New Brunswick schools.

The presenter will conclude with examples of student surveys and subsequent programs in schools in addition to personal stories from students, community members and teachers in New Brunswick that, if incorporated into policy, would be beneficial to all First Nation students.

Session #3 – Educational Policy/Practice in High School / Post Secondary

Chair: B. Anthazia Kadir

Erma Appleby**Valuing Formative Assessment in the High School Classroom**

Despite a multitude of evidence that proves formative assessment is valuable to both student and teacher learning, research indicates this practice has not become routine in the high school classroom culture. The traditional high school environment of teaching, testing and moving is not supported by research, and is actually disputed by many (Kohn, 1999, Muncer, 2006). Reputable and comprehensive research conducted by: Brookhart (2011), Leahy, Shepard, Stiggins (2001, 2002, 2009), and Black and Wiliam (1998, 2011) motivates this report. While the landmark article by Black and Wiliam, Inside the Black Box: Raising Standards through Classroom Assessment (1998) identified the correlation between effective formative assessment and student achievement; it did not include habitual high school classroom practices. This research project identifies challenges inherent to high school classrooms, and examines research that supports teachers in valuing formative assessment in report card grades.

Keywords: formative assessment, grading, reporting, high school, achievement

Brent Cruickshank, Sasha Wood, Dr. Catherine Holtmann, Marie Olson
AfterGrad NB

AfterGrad NB is a SSHRC-funded research project focused on youth retention through PSE. The project explores the impact of two interventions on New Brunswick grade 12 high school students' post-secondary education pathways. First, the researchers provided grade twelve students with up-to-date provincial labour market information through an interactive presentation and second, they facilitated an auto-application process to the province's four publicly funded universities. Data collection took place during visits to 12 high schools representing the Anglophone, Francophone and Aboriginal population in New Brunswick. This presentation will highlight preliminary findings from the fieldwork that involved 253 students. The team will speak about the project's unique methodological approach, which included partnerships between the research team, staff at the New Brunswick Department of Post-Secondary Education Training and Labour as well as administrators from UNB, STU, MTA and UdeM, lessons learned, and will share findings from a short survey completed by all research participants.

Robyn Lisa Young

A Mixed-Methods Study of Self-Determination and Academic Outcomes in Post-Secondary Students With Learning Disabilities

The proposed study will investigate self-determination experienced by post-secondary students with learning disabilities experiencing positive academic outcomes. This study will employ a mixed methods framework to examine the impact that a co-morbid mental illness has on self-determination, identity development and academic outcomes, for university students with a learning disability. Participants from a Student Accessibility Centre will complete a battery of questionnaires. Those results will then be used to select participants to be interviewed and their transcripts will be examined.

This study will be of importance to educators, as it will provide insight on how to best support students with disabilities while also bringing awareness to other challenges these students may face, such as mental illnesses (anxiety and depression). More specifically, it will provide further understanding on how to provide students with the proper tools to develop self-determination, identity, and ultimately achieve academic success despite any other challenges they face.

Keywords: post-secondary students, learning disabilities, self-determination, and co-morbid mental illness