The 9th Atlantic Education Graduate Student Conference (AEGSC)

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The Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (CCPA)

Entanglements of Learning

Asynchronous Presentation Abstracts[1]

June 20, 2020

Keynote: Dr. Cynthia Bruce
Topic ... Question ... Study ... Career?

For most of us entering graduate education, masters and doctoral research are linked to a deep curiosity and a love of learning. It's our area of focus throughout our degrees, but it also gives life to our work after thesis defense in remarkable, and sometimes unpredictable ways. Dr. Cynthia Bruce will explore this path through a discussion of her doctoral research in the area of disability studies and higher education. She will offer an overview of the genesis of her doctoral study and an outline of methodology and findings. Her work since defense has taken her in interesting and sometimes unanticipated directions, so she will conclude with a discussion of how her study shaped her research program and how she has been able to mobilize that program to support career growth and advancement.

Dr. Cynthia Bruce is a blind activist researcher and educator in the School of Education at Acadia University in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. Her current teaching and research activities aim to expose the systemic and institutional policies and practices that work against the realization of disability rights for disabled students and faculty. She researches experiences of student self-advocacy in order to understand and critique the role it plays in perpetuating ableism and ableist normativity on university campuses with the aim of identifying opportunities to generate meaningful inclusion for diverse learners. Dr. Bruce is completing her second year as a full time instructor in Acadia's School of Education, and she is pleased to be joining the Concordia Department of Creative Arts Therapies as an Assistant Professor of Music therapy, Health and Wellness on August 1st, 2020.

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[1] APA has released guidelines about how to cite a canceled conference presentation on your CV: https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/canceled-conferences

Title: Towards an Effective Teacher Evaluation: Understanding the Influence of Instructional Leadership on Teachers Performance Evaluation and Its Implication for Professional Development of Teachers

Abstract: Over the last few years, the focus of improving student learning has shifted from the conventional need to evaluate teaching performance, to making teachers accountable in their practices. In Canada, there has been a renewed emphasis on accountability and periodic performance assessment for teachers aimed at evaluating their teaching practices throughout their professional careers. Until now, there is an increasing concern on whether teachers' assessment leads to improved teachers' practices in some provinces. Questions also exist on how the outcome of the evaluation process is not explicitly linked to teacher's professional development, and how lack of formal training, incompetence and limited time hinder instructional leaders from providing the required support for teachers, during and after the process of evaluation. In New Brunswick, there has been a persistent change in education policies, which has led to increasing demand for teachers' accountability and improved practices toward achieving the provincial set goals on student performances. This research will aim at understanding the current process of teacher's performance assessment, and the extent to which the role of instructional leaders as evaluators influences professional development. The theoretical framework of Weick on sensemaking theory, adult learning theory of Knowles and conceptual framework of Instructional leadership will be explored to understand the aim of this research. This study will be informed by the interpretive paradigm, and a mixed method of data collection through the purposive sampling of high school teachers and principals will be used to obtain data for this research. This study is expected to help understand the concerns and difficulties surrounding the process of teacher evaluation and knowing the impact of school leadership on professional development aimed at improving teacher's practices.

Title: Identifying as Transgender and/or Gender Non-conforming and Participating in a Non-affirming Religion: An IPA inquiry

Abstract: Although transgender and gender non-conforming (TGNC) individuals are generally compared with lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) individuals, counsellors cannot assume that their challenges are identical. While there is extensive research about internalized homophobia, which is the process of directing negative messages and stereotypes about LGB individuals inwards, and the relationship LGB individuals have with religion, there is a lack of research about how TGNC individuals navigate this complex relationship. The lack of information regarding the relationship between identifying as TGNC and participating in a non-affirming religion leaves counsellors ill-prepared to counsel these individuals in a productive and culturally sensitive way. Several studies that have examined the relationship between religion and identification as a sexual minority have examined the LGB in LGBTQ2S+ and the implications this can have on the counselling relationship, while ignoring the TGNC individuals. Psychologists and counsellors should feel confident in relying on current guidelines for best practice and feel certain that those guidelines are based on current and rigorous research. This presentation will discuss my findings to date in this qualitative research inquiry in attempt to answer the question "How do transgender and gender non-conforming individuals navigate the complex relationship between their gender identity and non-affirming religions?"

Author: Katherine Bartlett
Presentation: http://aegsc.educ.unb.ca
Title: Literacy Instruction in Nunavut—Initial Findings

Abstract: The Nunavut Department of Education adopted a new literacy framework during the 2014/2015 school year. The purpose of this research study is to collect the experiences of Nunavut educators about literacy instruction in the bilingual (Inuktut and English) context of Nunavut. The intention is that this will provide insights into the on-going implementation of the literacy framework and inform the implementation of future educational initiatives. To embrace a balanced borrowing of Western and Indigenous research paradigms and methods, grounded theory guided by a theoretical perspective of social constructionism and Inuit Societal Values was selected as the methodology. Data is being collected using a survey, interviews, and talking circles (focus groups). Currently 55 educators have completed the survey and 2 interviews have taken place. This oral presentation will review the data collected to date, discuss emerging themes, and consider next steps.

Keywords: Inuit education, bilingual instruction, literacy, Inuktut

Author: Viviane Bolanos
Presentation: http://aegsc.educ.unb.ca
Title: Validating the Spanish Versions of the Mental Fitness and Resiliency Inventory, and the Positive Leadership Inventory to Assess Well-being and Psychological Safety in Workplaces Including Schools

Abstract: The purpose of the research is to validate the Spanish version of Mental Fitness and Resiliency Inventory, MFRI (Inventario de Bienestar Mental y Resiliencia, IBMR) and the Positive Leadership Inventory, PLI (Inventario de Liderazgo Positivo, ILP). These questionnaires are important measures used to support the Positive Workplace Framework (PWF) developed at UNB by Morrison and Peterson (2016). Both questionnaires are commonly used to assess workplace well-being, including in schools, across Canada. Having validated versions of these questionnaires in Spanish will open the door to using them in Latin American contexts. This research will be guided by three questions: 1) what are the psychometric properties of the Inventario de Bienestar Mental y Resiliencia, IBMR?; 2) what are the psychometric properties of the Inventario de Liderazgo Positivo, ILP?; and, 3) what is the quantitative relationship between the IBMR and the ILP sub-domains? A quantitative study design using data obtained through convenience sampling in various Guatemalan workplaces, including schools, will be followed. I will answer the first two research questions by calculating the internal consistency of each of the thirteen questionnaire scales (three for mental fitness, five for resiliency, and five for leadership) and report the results using Cronbach's alpha. Confirmatory factor analysis will be used to determine whether questionnaire data fit the PWF's theoretical model. The third research question will be answered using multiple linear regression (MLR) analysis. Results from this analysis will facilitate the development of targeted interventions designed to increase mental fitness, resiliency, and positive leadership practices in workplaces wanting to improve these aspects efficiently and effectively. This research will contribute to the academic field in positive psychology and provide a source of validation to questionnaires designed to diagnose, assess and promote positive workplace environments in Spanish-speaking Latin American contexts.

Keywords: well-being, mental fitness, resiliency, leadership, workplaces, mental health

Title: Replicating the Status Quo: State-run Education and Neoliberalism in the Age of COVID

Abstract: This paper revisits lingering questions regarding the state of education in our neoliberal and late-capitalist world. Drawing from past graduate studies, recent collaborative research, and our "new age of COVID," I challenge neoliberal assumptions about education and how state-run schools, curricula, and many teachers are largely uncritical proxies abetting a capitalist system. The paper questions the extent to which schools cause a replication of society's point-of-view and the neoliberal status quo. How, if at all, are pre-service teaching programs responsible for developing uncritical teachers unreflectively bent on replicating the status quo; or, is hegemonic dominant society hindering the critical potential of teaching professionals? I link political philosophy and the notion of social decay from ancient Greece where the moralities and virtues championed by the sophists have become the values and ideals that we celebrate today: liberalism, individualism, appetite satisfaction, globalization, and action over deliberation—all the pathologies that the ancient philosophers understood as the decay of life manifest. Can pre-service education programs and teachers overcome the economic and political pressures of neoliberalism by politicizing apolitical curricula and courses thereby disrupting the status quo which bolsters contemporary state education? How has the COVID-19 pandemic altered education in terms of increased alienation, surveillance, and the notion of freedom? What are the political, social, and economic impacts of COVID-19 on New Brunswick's education system?

Author: Jessica Fancy-Landry
Presentation: Accepted; not presenting
Title: Prioritization of Rural Youth in Nova Scotia: Understanding Rural School Success with Policy Gaps

Abstract: This study describes a qualitative exploration into rural school success in Nova Scotia and the prioritization of its rural youth in educational policy. Case study methods were used to conduct research into the factors that rural school personnel perceive as priorities in their buildings and the representation that rural school youth in Nova Scotia receive using a conceptual framework of the factors of rural school success (Barely & Beesley, 2007; McREL, 2005a; Canada Without Poverty, 2019). A review of the literature has revealed that little is known surrounding the concept of prioritizing youth in rural schools in Nova Scotia, regarding school effectiveness into what a high performing rural school looks like while taking into account vulnerability and other socioeconomic factors in policy development. This research study describes the important roles that key components such as community support, student well-being, teacher and student retainment, performance pressures and lack of policy play in the future of rural school success in Nova Scotia. The study concludes that the lack of Canadian, more narrowly Nova Scotian rural education policy puts rural youth at a disadvantage in their quest to obtain a quality and equitable education in Nova Scotia. Recommendations are provided to narrow this policy gap and share strategies that rural school personnel deemed effective. These strategies are recommended as guidelines into policy development to ensure that youth in rural Nova Scotia and indeed other jurisdictions, have an equitable voice in their pursuit of a quality education.

Author: Michelle Greenwell
Presentation: http://aegsc.educ.unb.ca
Title: Self-Empowerment in The Healing Process: An Exploration of Bioenergetic Wellness Techniques to Enhance Personal Decision-Making and Provide Tools for Maintaining Wellness and Health

Abstract: Self-empowerment is an approach to personal health care that promotes and optimizes the investment of personal time and energy with specific tools for directed self-care. Qi YINtegration is a BioEnergetic Wellness program currently being taught by the researcher to students in a group setting. The conversations involved in this program shift the responsibility for health, recovery and choices from an external source of wellness achievement (i.e. doctor, physiotherapist, massage therapist, healer), to an integrated approach embracing an internal source of personal experience and skill building to support wellness and identify when additional medical assistance is required. The focus of this research project was to provide selected tools for everyday living that supported body, mind and spirit. These included: 1. muscle monitoring to identify energetic shifts; 2. Injury Recall Technique to reset musculoskeletal, psychological or emotional imbalance prior to physical or movement interventions. 3. Breath with basic movement patterns from Tai Chi. 4. Goal Setting to set priorities or vision and identify directions of growth and discovery for the person. Retrospective, qualitative interviews with former students identified the value of these tools in their confidence to oversee their own healthcare needs. Of equal importance was the opportunity to be a part of a group and have valuable conversations and input with others about the program and their wellness concerns. Physical exploration of the concepts, their history and their significance to wellness will be shared in the presentation to provide insight into bioenergetic wellness tools and their possibility.

Keywords: self-empowerment, BioEnergetic Wellness, muscle monitoring, Injury Recall Technique, goal setting, Tai Chi

Author: Katie Hamill
Presentation: http://aegsc.educ.unb.ca
Title: Collage as a Participatory Visual Research Method for Social Change

Abstract: Participatory visual methods (PVM) of data collection may encourage participants to think deeply and critically about the subject at hand and express themselves in a reflective manner, while working towards making their experiences visual (Mitchell, de Lange, & Molestane, 2017). PVM is a manner of collecting qualitative data through visual products created by participants (Packard, 2008; Mitchell, de Lange, & Molestane, 2017). Pain (2012) argues that PVM allows participants to employ non-verbal communication wherein they are free to express themselves fully. Collage is an approachable artform that incorporates both images and text fragments in an informal cut and paste manner with inexpensive materials (Davies, 2008). Making collages allows participants to make their experiences visual, and it requires little practice. In this presentation, I ask, how might collage as a participatory visual method work to highlight the lived realities of participants that are silenced in traditional forms of data collection? How might collage as a research method help to display the lived realities of participants? Drawing on the work of Butler-Kisber & Poldma (2010), Davis (2008), and Gerstenblatt (2013), as well as a reflection on a duo-ethnographic study on my work as a teaching assistant in an Introduction to Geography course in Spring 2019, I have found that collage allows for self-expression in an accessible manner while also making lived realities visual.

Keywords: collage, data collection, participatory visual methods, research methods

Author: Angelina Heer
Presentation: Accepted; not presenting
Title: The Heartbeat of the Drum in the Research Experience

Abstract: Indigenous peoples continue to remain over-represented in the Canadian prison system. There is a lack of research on the resources available for Indigenous offenders as they reintegrate back into the community, the obstacles they face and the supports that they need. In keeping with Indigenous paradigms of conducting research in a collaborative way, this research will utilize a community-based participatory methodology for all phases. Relationships within local communities have been established, and consultations have been performed to establish the objectives of the research. We will explore how Indigenous communities in the region of Fredericton, New Brunswick are currently responding to the needs of Indigenous male ex- offenders who are, upon their release, reintegrating into the community. Building on community relationships is central to the theoretical approach being used. As the drum represents the heartbeat of mother earth in local First Nation(s) communities, incorporating the hand drum with our focus groups will set the heart rhythm of our group experience. When we sit in a circle, we not only strengthen our own voice, we learn to adjust to match our rhythm to another, and this relationship is aligned with an Indigenous Research Paradigm as we become accountable to all our relations. This research has the potential to contribute to culturally sensitive counselling practices and shape the development of future policy. This is a brief summary of work in progress as we are in the preliminary stages of this research idea.

Author: Margaret Knickle
Presentation: Accepted; not presenting
Title: What Can be Learned from the Mahone Bay Museum's Decolonizing Initiatives to Develop Mi'kmaw Narratives?

Abstract: The research question that this study asks is what can be learned from the decolonizing initiatives that the Mahone Bay Museum is undertaking to privilege the Mi'kmaw voice concerning the museum's current museological practice? This study is documenting the decolonizing process being undertaken by the Mahone Bay Museum, identifying lessons learned and developing tools that will be useful for other museums also interested in decolonization and indigenization. The researcher is a volunteer on the committee tasked to work on this project. The intention of this research is to be useful to other museums if they choose to take on similar decolonial/indigenizing work. The researcher hopes to identify and describe in detail the processes taken by the museum on its decolonization/indigenization journey and to document those things that worked well, tensions and problems encountered and solutions that are worked out. The outcomes of the committee's work of establishing a Mi'kmaw narrative will also be recorded and analysed for positive impact on the community. This research follows a community participatory approach and uses relationship as a primary methodology. The final work from this study will be the PhD dissertation of the presenter. The conference presentation will focus the importance of indigenizing and decolonizing museums which is part of the TRC Calls to Action for truth and reconciliation.

Author: Aryn Lisitza
Presentation: http://aegsc.educ.unb.ca

Title: The Intimate Relationships of Gifted Adults: Exploring Resilience Processes and Dabrowski's 'third factor'

Abstract: Intimate relationships are an important contributor to life satisfaction (Demir, 2010). Since the 1980's, parent-child attachment, which was originally conceptualized by John Bowlby, has been systematically implicated in adult romantic relationships. In these studies, however, little attention has been paid to gifted adults, which could be because there is debate on how to identify giftedness. While a large body of research in this area focuses on Dabrowski's conceptualization of developmental potential, one facet of his writings that is not represented is the 'third factor'- an internal force characterized primarily by autonomy (Dabrowski, Kawczak, & Sochanska, 1973). Irrespective of these identification debates, Dijkstra and colleagues recently found that intellectually gifted individuals have more fearful attachment in their intimate relationships, however they do not report lower relationship satisfaction (Dijkstra, Barelds, Ronner, & Nauta, 2017). These findings suggest that gifted individuals possess other resilience- promoting factors in their intimate relationships, which may implicate the 'third factor'. The present study will explore how gifted adults cultivate resilience in their relationships and how this may relate to Dabrowski's 'third factor'. We will employ a qualitative research design, using convenience sampling to recruit participants from online gifted communities. We will conduct 8- 10 semi-structured interviews, each of which will be analyzed using thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2014). This study could provide insight into Dabrowski's 'third factor' in gifted adults, as well as resilience processes in intimate relationships of the gifted, which could be used to increase relationship and life satisfaction (Demir, 2010) for all.
Keywords: gifted, intimate relationships, Dabrowski, resilience, third factor

Author: Lisa Michaud
Presentation: http://aegsc.educ.unb.ca

Title: Oral Proficiency—The Communicative Competence of Early French Immersion Students

Abstract: The Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) assesses the oral proficiency of students enrolled in French Immersion programs in New Brunswick. Results from this assessment—often used to depict French second language program efficiency within the province—revealed that 50.7% of grade 12 Early French Immersion (EFI) students reached the anticipated Advanced level of oral proficiency in 2018-2019. This qualitative research of EFI student performances on OPIs explores the discursive strengths and limitations of interviews rated at the Intermediate Plus and Advanced levels of oral proficiency in light of Celce-Murcia's theory of communicative competence (2007). A discourse analysis of interviews retrieved from the New Brunswick Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) revealed rich linguistic data stemming from thematized notes generated from coding. A comparative analysis of the Intermediate Plus and Advanced discourses revealed differences in students' linguistic abilities with consideration to (1) the extent to which students' answers conveyed communicative competence and (2) the precision with which the interview performances met proficiency descriptors (EECD, 2003). Such findings can inform teaching practices favouring a holistic approach to teaching speaking (Celce-Murcia, 2007; Goh & Burns, 2012; Le Bouthillier, 2018), narrow the divide between practical and theoretical aspects of language learning and assessment (Council of Europe, 2001), and help deconstruct the assessment criteria to raise oral proficiency achievements at the Advanced level. With the NB government dedicated to raising all students' levels of bilingualism, this research informs a theoretical gap pertinent to oral proficiency and FI instruction in the New Brunswick context.
Keywords: Early French Immersion, second language, Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI), oral assessment, New Brunswick, high school

Author: Alicia Noreiga
Presentation: http://aegsc.educ.unb.ca
Title: When Rural Dilemmas Intersect: A Methodological Approach to Exploring Rural Education in Trinidad and Tobago

Abstract: Education has played a historical role in the processes of decolonization and development in the twin-island country of Trinidad and Tobago (T&T). Yet, there is much concern that education policies and pedagogies in T&T do not always work toward the economic development of the country's 39% rural population. Today, the country's rural schools face poor facilities, low teacher recruitment and retention, along with low student attendance and academic performance, and use of a mandatory national curriculum that seldom addresses rural community needs. For this presentation, I will introduce my ongoing study aimed at examining the perceptions of rural educators, students and community members toward the roles schools play in the economic development of rural communities in the islands of Trinidad and Tobago (T&T). Relying on theoretical concepts, along with my experiences as a rural islander and educator, I will embark on a methodological approach to exploring four major theories (island theory, rural theory, decolonization theory, and critical theory) that frame a context for rural education in T&T. This bricolage approach will guide the analyzing of ways in which these theories intersect in relation to T&T's rural education, and by extension community development. This presentation and study have the potential to significantly contribute to the inadequate theoretical exploration of rural education in T&T, rural education from a community economic development standpoint, and comparative research aimed at examining views of educators, community members, and students.

Authors: Alicia Noreiga & Shernel Justin
Presentation: http://aegsc.educ.unb.ca
Title: From Majority to Minority: Using Cellphilms to reflect on Black International Student Identity

Abstract: Over the years, the number of international students attending Canadian universities has been steadily increasing (Houshmand, Spanierman, & Tafarodi, 2014). Canada's multicultural policy (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, (2020) emphasized the value of cultural diversity and equality. However, the intersection of Black issues and international student issues create a unique conundrum for Black international students. This dilemma can be evident in provinces such as New Brunswick where, in 2016, the province's Black population stood at less than 1% (Statistics Canada, 2020). Black international students are faced with exacerbated difficulties attributed to interlocking challenges; such as the absence of family and friends, isolation credited to being part of a visual minority group, absence of cultural connection, and stigmatization. It is; thus, important that students share their experiences and become active members in initiating a change of practices and policies that often do not consider the needs, challenges, and aspirations of Black international students. In this presentation, we will describe our experiences moving from the Caribbean islands of St Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago to New Brunswick and how our experiences have stimulated self-reflection and advocacy toward Black empowerment. We will share views on race in Black majority countries then describe our experiences moving to New Brunswick to pursue graduate studies; thus, becoming minorities. We will share ways in which racial consciousness has influenced our decisions to promote awareness of Black issues through the production of cellphilms (cellphone + film production) and will share a couple of our cellphilms which were produced as part of a series of cellphilm workshops for Black students.

Author: Janet Payne
Title: Alternatives to Mainstream Career Counselling: Women's Group Based Narrative Therapy Using Matriarchal, Indigenous, and Celtic Ways of Knowing

Abstract: A review of current literature points to a potential need for a new form of career counselling that will go beyond matching exercises and look at the search for meaning that young female graduates are longing for. Group-based narrative therapy, where young women come together to explore what motivates their career decision making, will offer an alternative to the types of career assessments currently available. By framing these weekly sessions on practices and traditions held by Indigenous peoples and ancient Celtic tribes, young women will view their options through a matriarchal lens and consider ways of knowing, ways of being, and ways of working unimagined within a patriarchal framework. The ultimate benefit to society will be the empowerment of iGen female graduates to make career decisions in line with their values and quest for meaning, leading to greater health and overall balance within mind, body and spirit while challenging the roles that have been predetermined for them within western society. At a time when our Earth and our society are dealing with the consequences of long held patriarchal beliefs, this matriarchal approach to career counselling may be timely.

Author: Courtney Pyrke
Title: Are We Creating an Informed Society?: Exploring the Information and Media Literacy Skills of New Brunswick Students

Abstract: Information and Media Literacy (IML) has become increasingly important as the amount of information and misinformation drastically increased online since the advent of the 21st century. As stated by Bradley (2013), information literacy is a human right that is essential in achieving personal, social, and economic outcomes of citizens. However, high school students around the world continue to graduate with little or no IML skills, which has had many ramifications, particularly in developed nations like Canada, such as the resurgence of vaccine preventable illness outbreaks and markedly increased influence and distribution of political propaganda. In a 2018 study, a survey of approximately 7,500 students at 20 postsecondary institutions in Ontario found that 25-30% of university and college students do not have adequate literacy and numeracy skills (Friesen, 2018). For these reasons it is essential to address the information gap that exists in society, particularly at high school graduation, when students are supposed to be prepared to enter the world having attained all essential life skills.

My research aims to answer the question: how are students being prepared to conduct research (i.e. Information and Media Literacy) during high school education in New Brunswick and how does the resulting level of preparedness for university level research impact academic success and mental health (library and information anxiety)? In this oral presentation, you will learn about the challenges of IML in Canada, the literature on this topic, and the new research that is being conducted.

Authors: Kim Stewart & Candace Gallagher

Title: Tangled Literate Histories

Abstract: Feminist ways of being allows us to be vulnerable, willing to admit doubt, and live with an expanded view of literacy learning and teaching. As educators we recognize that "…literacy learning is part of [children's] histories, not something that children do as a cognitive task divorced from their lives" (Hicks, 2002, p. 37). In our individual research projects, we revisit historic entanglements of our literate narratives, mapping how these narratives shape who we are today (MacKey, 2016). We ask how does valuing the web of relationships expand affirmative and creative possibilities in classrooms? Our desire is to value the literate histories that are often silenced and sometimes lost within standardized, institutional ways of being and becoming.

Keywords: reconceptualizing literacies, feminist theory, posthumanism, autobiographical narratives