



PRESENTED BY THE GRADUATE STUDENTS OF  
THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION

The Inaugural

# RESEARCH IN EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM

April 14, 2010



# *Welcome*

The Faculty of Education wishes to welcome you to the inaugural **Research in Education Symposium**. This event is significant for two reasons. First, it highlights the important research our masters' and doctoral students are conducting. We are proud of this work and the potential influence the results will have on the field of education. It is also important for you, our greater community, to see the various projects in which your schools have been involved come to fruition.

Second, this event is organized entirely by the students, themselves. The enthusiasm for the idea of staging such an event can be seen both in the number of submissions and in the number of individuals involved in its organization. This speaks well of the sense of community that exists among these new researchers and that we are cultivating in the Faculty. Thank you to those who undertook this important service for the advancement of our Graduate Education program.

While the intent of the Symposium is to showcase the research, it is also designed to enable students to practice their presentation skills and to receive feedback about their work. To that end, we encourage you to ask questions of the researchers and to provide suggestions to enhance their work.

We appreciate your interest and involvement in this exciting endeavour.

Bob Macmillan

Associate Dean (Graduate Programs & Research)



## **SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

**3:30 - 4:00 p.m.**— First Poster Session - Cafeteria

**4:15 - 5:15 p.m.**— First Roundtable Session - Room 1141  
First Paper Presentation Session -  
Rooms 2017, 2021, 2023

**5:30 - 6:30 p.m.**—Official Opening and Welcome - Community Room

- Welcome from Dr. Julia O’Sullivan, Dean of Education
- Dr. Linda T. Miller, Vice-Provost (Graduate and Post-Doctoral Studies)
- Refreshments

**6:00 - 6:30 p.m.**—Second Poster Session - Cafeteria

**6:30 - 7:30 p.m.**—Second Roundtable Session - Room 1141  
Second Paper Presentation Session -  
Rooms 2017, 2021, 2023

**7:30 p.m.**—Closing Remarks - Community Room

- Dr. Robert B. Macmillan, Associate Dean (Graduate Programs and Research)

*Would you like to converse with a new colleague? Discuss some interesting research? Feel free to relax in our “Ideas Café”, located in the Community Room from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m., and continue the conversation.*

## **PRESENTER LIST**

### *Poster Presentations (Board #)*

Amirmoorandian Malhami, Ani (14)	Li, Vickie Wai Kei (21)
Caughlin, Jensen R. (1)	Loerts, Terry (13)
Clapton, Lydia (2)	Moir, Wesley (15)
Crocker, Wendy A. (3 and 8)	Nemeth, Alyson N. (16)
Crowley-Thorogood, Kelly (4)	Samuels, Boba (7)
Dishke Hondzel, Catharine (8)	Sauder, Adrienne E. (8 and 17)
Findlay, Nora (5)	Servais, Michelle (18)
Fyn, Dawn (6)	Sinclair, Jennifer (19)
Garbati, Jordana (7)	Taskoh, Ali khorsandi (20)
Ingre, Jenny (9)	Watson, Anne (22)
Kalat, Kasia (10)	Wilkins, Jessica (23)
Kamau, Njeri M. (11)	Zhang, Zheng (24)
Kirkpatrick, Lori (12)	

### *Roundtable Presentations (Table)*

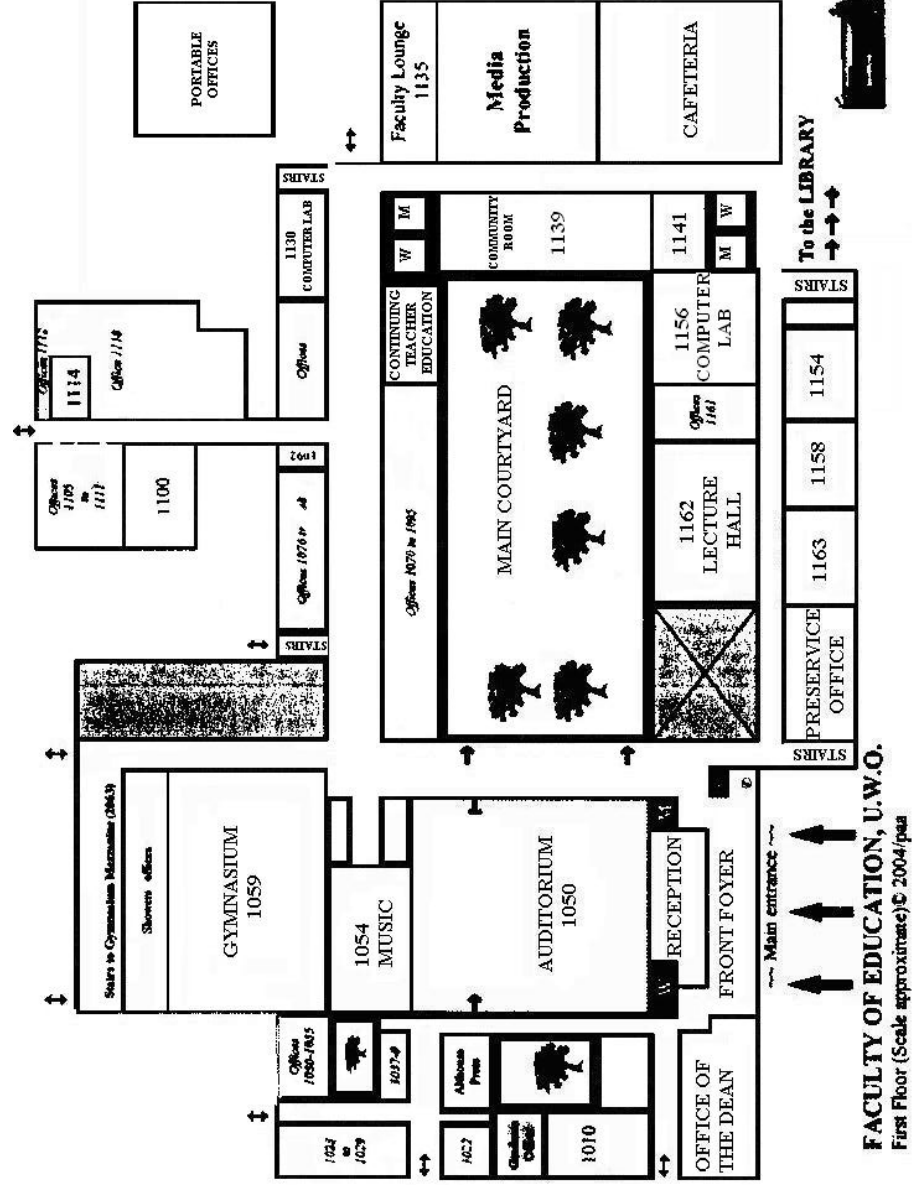
4:15 p.m.	6:30 p.m.
Anderson, Kerry (B)	Davidson, Katherine (B)
Du, Xiaoxiao (A)	Masinire, Alfred (A)
Loerts, Terry (A)	Piccinin, Vanessa (B)
Malik, Abdul (B)	Sanchez Cruz, Elida (A)

### *Oral Presentations (Room #)*

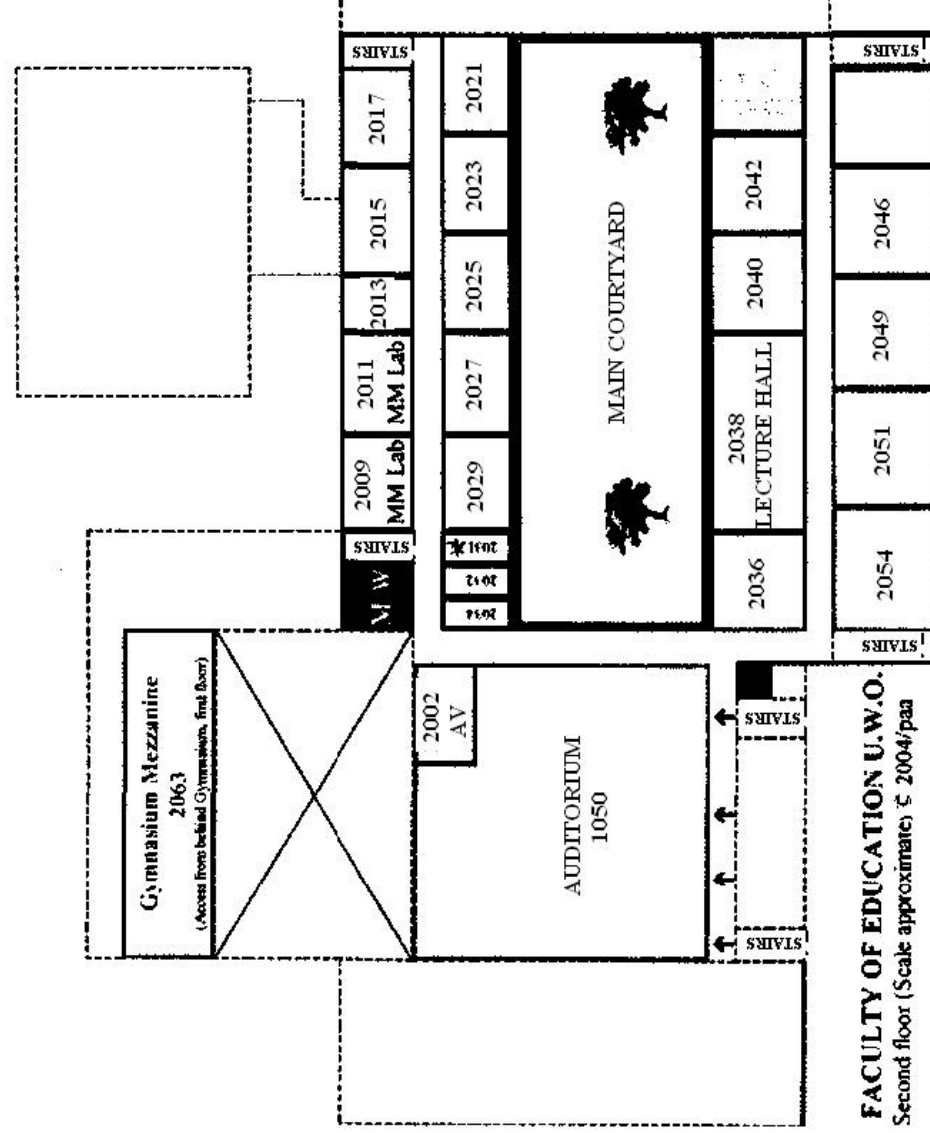
4:15 p.m.	6:30 p.m.
Cahill, Amy (2017)	Gichuru, Jane W. (2021)
Dishke Hondzel, Catharine (2023)	Irwin, Bill (2023)
Kotilehti, Suzanna (2021)	Ng, Tiffany (2021)
Stepien, Magdalena (2021)	Sauder, Adrienne E. (2017)
Watson, Anne (2017)	Taskoh, Ali khorsandi (2017)
Young, Gabrielle (2023)	

*\* Note: M.Ed. or PhD. designation relates to program  
and to the degree to be conferred \**

## LOWER LEVEL



## UPPER LEVEL



## **POSTER PRESENTATIONS - ABSTRACTS**

### **Ani Amirmooradian Malhami, PhD., Curriculum**

#### *Digital space and creativity*

Digital space is considered by some to be an ideologically interested space: a space for control (Postman, 1993 & 1995). Others consider both the potentials of this space for learning and creating and the dangers that this space might embody for users (Brewer, 2003; Kellner, 1998; Kellner, 2003; Moulthrop, 1994; Rosenberg, 1994). However, I do believe that in this world of globalization and the fast growth of technologies, we as researchers, educators, teachers, and students should focus on the potentials that these digital spaces embody for creating a unique way of learning. According to May (2005), Deleuze believes that we need to “create an ontology that answers to the question of how one might live rather than dictating its limits” (p. 17).

### **Jensen R. Caughlin, M.Ed., Curriculum**

#### *The vortex: Literacy grows here*

As a metaphor for Literacy Development, this poster synthesizes several theories of literacy development into a distilled explanation of, “the stuff of which literacy soup is made,” so that people can easily see the components involved and make sure that all the necessary ingredients will be available for learners to pick and choose among them.

The base for this poster is a photograph of an original acrylic painting of mine (Spin Symbol Series # 16: The Vortex). To me, the “Vortex”, encapsulates a transformative cycle of exploring, learning and taking nourishment to grow and develop. After establishing the environmental base, with my painting, I scanned the literature for ingredients that needed to be present and grouped them under three general categories which were well delineated by Gregory (2008, p. 15) when she stated that, “Learning to read is viewed on three levels; the sociocultural (the outer culture in which the family lives) the interpersonal (the child’s relationship with other learners and teachers) and intrapersonal (processes within the mind).” The categories remain unlabeled, although they are separated spatially and differentiated by colour.

In between the groupings, I added arrows that reinforced the centrifugal directionality, while at the same time being large enough to carry the unifying message; Literacy grows here. These words and symbols were then overlaid on top of the base painting to create the final effect. *An extensive bibliography accompanies this poster to give credit to the components that have already been put together in Literacy Development Research.*



**Lydia Clapton, M.Ed., Curriculum—Arts**

*Arts-based inquiry: Can it be used as a paradigm and methodology for research?*

The poster presentation is based on Susan Finley's (2005) article reviewing arts-based research as a viable methodology and paradigm, particularly its performative component. Viewing the arts as a pragmatic methodology underscores the importance of regarding assessment and evaluation in the arts as a substantial contribution to research in pedagogy and education, as well as the arts in the community and classroom. The poster presents a revolutionary pedagogical visual of the review article and how an arts-based methodology integrates three genealogical historical stories of: (a) ...turning to activist social science, (b) the emergence of arts-based activist research, and (c) the turn to radical, ethical, and revolutionary arts-based inquiry (Finley, 2005, p. 682). The poster arrangement highlights the arts and combines research methodology practices to form an informative optical artefact. Other key components associated to arts-based research will include: community and environment; aesthetics; social justice; globalization; researcher identity and artist participants; political activism; social responsibility; heuristics; critical theories; creative and spiritual relationships; and multiple voices. Key researchers will also be highlighted, such as Eisner (1998), Denzin (2003, 2000), Felshin (1995), Guba (1967), and McLaren (2001).

**Wendy A. Crocker, PhD., Curriculum**

*Through a principal's eyes: What conservative colony Mennonite children can teach school leaders about literacy*

In rural southwestern Ontario, there are pockets of the conservative colony Mennonite culture – several hundred students - in schools within the local public board. These children speak Low German (Plautdietsch), a language with an oral history but not written or read (Epp, 1999). The model of “autonomous literacy” (Street, 1985) is evident in school, prescribed and reinforced by provincial educational policy (e.g. Ontario curriculum, EQAO assessments). The current focus on school improvement privileges print literacy (Kress, 2003) with its emphasis on the “in school” literacies of reading and writing. The funds of knowledge (Moll et al, 1982) demonstrated by the “out of school” literacy practices of the Mennonite children are not acknowledged. This is an emergent study drawing on narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004) and autoethnography (Chang, 2008; Ellis, 2000) to respond to my research questions. Critical incidents gathered from my time as a principal will be shared with administrators of other schools that serve Mennonite children. Through purposeful sampling of both the principals and their stories, narratives of practice will be generated and analyzed for patterns and themes. However, this is not a study simply about the “interesting stories of (a group) whose lived experiences have been, and are still, pathologized” (Shields et al, 2005, p. xviii). Analysis and representations of our shared stories will have much to teach school leaders about the different views of literacy existing between policy and practice, and how children from minoritized cultures navigate this contested space.

**Kelly Crowley-Thorogood, PhD., Policy**

*Cambodian national education policy: Global wants or/and local needs*

The poster proposed in this abstract will be broadly concerned with the impact of globalization on education policy making in Cambodia, a post-conflict, developing country. Cambodia's education system was almost entirely wiped out by the 1990's due various military and social conflicts that had plagued the country. As such, Cambodia provides an excellent case of post-conflict educational reconstruction. The poster will explore how multinational financial organizations such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank are influencing the direction of national education policy in Cambodia, using a globalization theoretical perspective. The focus will be on a policy analysis of several key policy documents and directives from the multinational organizations and Cambodian government. Through this analysis three themes become apparent. These include the marketisation of education, partnerships, and the purpose of education in Cambodia. These themes present a complex picture of an education system in transition under the influence of national and international needs and desires.

**Catharine Dishke Hondzel, Adrienne E. Sauder, & Wendy A. Crocker, PhD.**

*Listening: Echoes of women's identity in tattoo art*

Tattoos. The very word evokes a spectrum of images: seedy, smoky front room parlors; prison marks; intricate henna designs; decorative images and symbols. This poster outlines a three-pronged research project that will investigate the performance, presence, and prejudice surrounding women and tattoos in education and academia. Over the course of this multi-layered discourse, women will be invited to share stories about their tattoos, discuss the ways their tattoos have been perceived and reacted to in the classroom, as well as invited to disclose prejudice or discrimination experienced because of visible body art. Common threads among the stories will be teased out for examination using a sociocultural, specifically "co-constructionist" (Valsiner) framework, while exploring notions of social identity, institutional positioning, and stigma within an educational context.

**Nora Findlay, PhD., Policy**

*At law's end: Administrative discretion in student disciplinary action*

The focus of this poster is a proposed study which seeks to determine how school administrators exercise discretion in matters of student discipline. The research examines administrative discretion from a legal perspective and the manner in which the law constrains and structures administrators' actions in schools. The poster will also consider the significance of administrators' valuation processes in their decision-making. Early findings from the literature will be presented which reflect the effects of principals' discretionary decision-making in student disciplinary issues and the implications for students in the school setting.

**Dawn Fyn, PhD., Curriculum***Early is better... isn't it? Perceptions about Inuit students learning in a second language*

As a first year PD student my research is for and about Inuit of Nunavik. Nunavik, located within the province of Quebec, is a region that consists of 5% of the land mass of Canada. This region is bordered by the 55<sup>th</sup> parallel to the south, Hudson's Bay to the West, Labrador to the East and the Hudson's Strait to the north. Nunavik is characterized by its beautiful tundra, multiple rivers and fourteen coastal villages. The villages are home to the Inuit of Nunavik, who have inhabited this area for more than 4, 000 years. Kativik School Board is the school board for Nunavik. For fourteen years I lived and worked with the Inuit of Nunavik. I have invested the vast majority of my professional life to this region: believing that education is the key that will allow the Inuit of Nunavik to move towards emancipation. My research, informed by critical theory and the work of Jim Cummins, and Shelley Taylor, will focus on the importance of Inuktitut as a language of communication and as a bridge to learning a second language. I will particularly look at various options for introduction of a second language, with a keen interest in pre-serving and strengthening the first language.

**Jordana Garbati & Boba Samuels, PhD.***Authorship in educational research publications. Are students participating?*

Professional collaboration in academia is valued because it is believed to encourage the generation and synthesis of ideas, to enhance workplace environments, and to comprise a key element in mentoring practices. One type of collaboration is formal coauthorship; it often draws more attention for its problems and potential controversies than for its putative benefits (American Psychological Association, 2001; Holaday & Yost, 1995; Saunders et al., 2000). There is, however, some evidence that collaborative practices differ systematically between disciplines and that these differences have measurable consequences (Laband & Tollison, 2000). In our study, we examined formal collaboration in academic publishing and analyzed the extent to which students participate in such publication. We focused on peer-reviewed, educational research journals in four subfields: general education, educational psychology, language studies, and literacy studies. We found that one-third of all articles published are sole-authored. Sole-authored publications occur twice as often in bottom-tier journals as in top-tier journals. Students comprise 9% of total authorship. Only 1% of sole-authors, however, are students. Our findings show that student authorship is minimally evident in published research. As novice members of the research community, students may not be expected to participate fully in the process of research dissemination. Our study questions students' positioning in graduate programs.

**Jenny Ingrey, PhD., Gender, Equity, and Social Justice**

*The public toilet as site for gender trouble*

Gender expression and performance is a part of everyone's everyday experience and it cannot be separated from the work that goes on in schools. The public toilet in schools is also a part of the quotidian, encapsulating the private world of individuals. But for the gender nonconforming student, the public toilet is a site of contention, danger and potential violence as queer and transgender theory purport. The permanent structure of the public toilet represents a very potent and living practice of gender regulation and punishment.

Several theorists help locate my understandings about the problem of the toilet. Conceptually, the work of Rasmussen (2009), Halberstam (1998), and Garber (1992) around the public toilet as a discursive site of gender performativity defines my focus. Visual methodology (data in the form of photography, drawings, etc.) informs the notion that material space can contribute to social norms. The work of O'Donaghue (2006) and MacGregor (2004) justifies the significance of the analysis of architectural space within schools. Butler's (1990) *gender performativity* and Foucault's (1978) panopticon are also highly important concepts that frame how schools are part of normalizing practices of surveillance of gender expression.

**Kasia Kalat, M.Ed., Policy**

*The impact of neoliberal educational reform on student achievement in Ontario: Investigating literacy and numeracy coaches' perspectives*

Within the context of educational policy studies, neoliberal ideologies raise many complex questions about the reconfiguration of political power in contemporary society and our educational system. The most worrying of all concerns is the fact that the benefits of neoliberal educational reforms are unevenly distributed. Absent from neoliberal discourse, is a deep engagement and understanding of issues related to class, race, gender, sexual orientation and religion. Neoliberal reforms are perpetuating and strengthening the inequalities experienced by minority students and developing an "underachieving class" within the educational system. This research proposes to examine the effects of neoliberal discourse on educational testing policy and to understand the significance of these changes on those individuals who are in charge of raising student achievement. The rationale is to explore how the intended and actual outcomes of standardized testing and student achievement programs have been taken up and experienced at the local level. Specifically, the challenges and opportunities literacy and numeracy coaches are confronted with as they work to improve student achievement for all students will be explored.

**Njeri M. Kamau, PhD., Gender, Equity, and Social Justice**

*Education: A dream out of reach for HIV+ children*

According to UNAIDS, 2.1 million children are living with HIV/AIDS worldwide. Their HIV status has resulted in members of their communities resisting their admission and integration into public schools. Several reports suggest that HIV+ children be segregated and allowed to learn in separate facilities. This is despite the UNESCO Action of Inclusive Education in 1994, which states that “schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, emotional, social, intellectual or other conditions, including HIV/AIDS. Marginalization of HIV+ children emanates from the stigma attached to the disease and the fear of contagion. However, stigma and discrimination have detrimental effects on the well-being of HIV+ children which include isolation, fear, low-self-esteem, poor social skills, slow mental development, all of which impact directly on their academic performance. The availability of antiretroviral drug has resulted in higher survival rates of HIV+ children, thus increasing their number in schools. Although the education sector acknowledges the existence of HIV+ children in schools and their right to education, proper guiding policies and resources to support their educational needs are lacking. In this paper, I will investigate how schools can sufficiently address stigma and discrimination in order to create a conducive environment for learning and integration of HIV+ children in schools.

**Lori Kirkpatrick, PhD., Educational Psychology/Special Education**

*What do students with different levels of writing ability gain from the same writing instruction?*

This study's purpose is to determine what students with different levels of writing ability gain from the same writing instruction. In a meta-analysis, Graham (2006) found that the benefits of *Cognitive Strategy Instruction* in writing did not depend on students' writing ability. Likewise, in a recent study, we found that planning the structure of compare-contrast reports prior to writing was highly effective in improving students' writing, for students with low and high writing ability (Kirkpatrick & Klein, 2009). Because the scores for students with low and high writing ability were different at both pretest and posttest, the types of improvements they made must have been different. The goal of this study is to identify and compare those improvements across ability levels.

**Vickie Wai Kei Li, PhD., Curriculum***Mother-tongue education policy in post-colonial Hong Kong*

Hong Kong had been a colony of Britain for over 150 years. The long period of colonization has consolidated the hegemony of English in the territory. During the colonial period, the British government adopted a *laissez-faire* approach to the medium of instruction in schools. A school's decision was usually driven by parental preference for an English-medium education. On July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1997, Hong Kong returned to its motherland, China. Just two months after the handover, the Hong Kong government announced that it would implement a mandatory Chinese-medium teaching policy in 1998, with a view to enhancing students' learning through their mother-tongue. Twelve years have passed since the implementation of the policy. The present study aims to examine the effectiveness of the policy, as reflected by students' public examination results. A content analysis has been conducted on the relevant policy documents, and students' public examination results have been gathered to serve as a policy effectiveness indicator. Findings reveal that mother-tongue teaching is beneficial to students' learning in some subjects, especially the language-intensive ones. However, students' performance in English learning has been adversely affected by the policy. The study concludes with recommendations for selecting an appropriate medium of instruction for Hong Kong students.

**Terry Loerts, PhD., Curriculum***Multimodal literacy opportunities in the grade 6 classroom*

For my poster presentation, I will be discussing my current research having to do with multimodal learning opportunities for children as they participate in the literacy curriculum in a grade 6 class. My main objective in the poster will be to discuss my theoretical positions in my research, namely Multimodal theory, New Literacy Studies theory, and Curriculum theory. Although I am in the beginning phase of collecting data, I anticipate discussing how these theories inform my research as I will be looking at what opportunities are available for students to communicate their "interest" (Jewitt & Kress, 2003, p. 11) within the different levels of curricula (intended, operational, null, and hidden). I also intend to present how my hybrid methodology is particularly suited for literacy research as Dyson and Genishi (2005) have extensively field tested case studies utilizing ethnographic tools, thus providing an excellent grounding for my research as I seek to illuminate the possibilities of multimodal literacy practices through the various levels of curricula.

**Wesley Moir, M.Ed., Policy - Leadership***Student engagement and retention in Ontario's university system*

Student retention is a major issue impacting universities as consistent leavings prior to graduation bring about numerous costs for institutions, students and communities at large. This thesis examined student services and out-of-class activities affecting student satisfaction, year one to year two retention and overall graduation rates across six public Ontario universities. Approaching retention under the framework of student engagement, this study utilized recent National Survey of Student Engagement results to quantitatively analyze first-year student participation in and perceptions of their institution's services, which contribute to success. What emerged were statistically significant relationships pertaining to year one to year two retention and strong institutional support in all areas of student life, in addition to on-campus involvement and strong peer groups. Overall, results coincided with major research from the United States and produced generalizable findings within the Ontario context, thus providing strategic focus areas for campus policies and practices concerning first-year student support.

**Alyson N. Nemeth, M.Ed., Educational Psychology/Special Education***Why does the "gifted female" exist? An historical cross-case analysis of a gender-specific category*

There are no proven intellectual or psychometric differences between gifted females and males, yet researchers continue to state that further study on gifted females is warranted. The primary reasons emanate from the 1900s suggestion of the inability of gifted females to pursue professional careers and degrees. However, before asking more questions about the gifted female, it must be asked: why does she exist? According to the cross-case method proposed by Yin (2006), this theoretical perspective will form the basis for selecting the cases to be examined, direct the development of the data collection protocol, and provide an initial organizational method for data analysis. Four assumptions commonly made about gifted females will be framed as questions and used to categorize the extant literature. These questions will be: Firstly, do gifted females differ significantly from gifted males?; Second, do gifted females have the same talents?; Third, do all gifted females have the same educational outcomes?; fourth, do gifted females experience the same barriers? Findings from this study will highlight the importance for research to begin identifying individual needs of gifted females. By doing so, gifted females will be properly supported in the classroom and counseled effectively when choosing career and life paths.

**Adrienne E. Sauder, PhD., Educational Psychology/Special Education**

*Exploring gifted adults' perception of giftedness in their pursuit of graduate education*

Gifted students are expected and encouraged to explore their potential and this can be actualized through the pursuit of graduate education. Why then do individuals endowed with so much academic potential shy away from the upper echelons of academia? This qualitative study explores eight gifted adults' perceptions of giftedness, especially as it relates to their experiences of education at all levels. This study also provides insight into the emotional impact being labeled as gifted has on an individual's self-concept and academic identity. The major themes were revealed using the interpretive phenomenological analysis method (Smith & Osborn, 2003), while an adaptation of the listening guide method (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, & Bertsch, 2003) was used to provide a unique and personal perspective of giftedness that complimented and enhanced the major themes. Specifically, this study illuminates the lack of evolution that an individual's understanding and perception of giftedness undergoes across the lifespan, and the impact such a static and school-bound understanding has on gifted adults' self-concept. Furthermore, it reveals how important the understanding and internalization of failure can be on the self-concept of gifted individuals, and that this issue needs immediate attention at all levels of the education system.

**Michelle Servais, Joint PhD., Cognition and Learning**

*Understanding teachers' information needs, perceived competencies, and information-seeking behaviours for special education information*

The research literature consistently indicates that teachers desire more information on inclusion and teaching children with special needs. The purpose of this exploratory study is to gather information that can be used to better understand teachers' information needs, perceived competencies, preferences for information sources, and information-seeking behaviours related to special education. This study involves Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8 teachers from Southwestern Ontario School Boards who have been invited to participate in a brief online survey about their special education information needs, preferences, and teaching experiences. Teachers (including novice, intermediate, and experienced teachers) will then be invited to participate in a follow-up semi-structured interview to provide their views and perspectives on teachers' special education information needs, preferences for information sources, and information-seeking behaviours. The approach to this research is a mixed methods exploratory, concurrent triangulation design emphasizing a convergence model. Given the current atmosphere of fiscal responsibility, it is important to be able to focus resources where they are needed. The

results of this study may be valuable in determining better ways that information can be provided to support and meet teachers' special education information needs. Further, by participating in this research, teachers may benefit from examining their professional development needs.



**Jennifer Sinclair, PhD., Educational Psychology/Special Education**

*Autism and academics: How has PPM 140 impacted teachers' programming?*

The research in literacy instruction for students with autism reveals that students with severe autism can benefit from the same Balanced Literacy and Authentic Literacy Instruction as their typically-developing peers. Despite this, many educational programs for students with severe autism focus on teaching functional life skills through Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA), at times to the exclusion of academic skills such as literacy. In May 2007, the Ontario Ministry of Education released Policy/Program Memorandum No. 140 (PPM 140), which mandates that all students with autism in Ontario be taught using the principles of ABA. Within the confines of this current educational policy, how do teachers meet the literacy needs of this population of students? Using a web-based survey of teachers in self-contained classrooms, this study will examine teachers' familiarity with the research on literacy instruction for this population of students. It will also look at how the Ministry's current emphasis on ABA facilitates and/or constrains teachers' efforts to provide research-based literacy instruction for students with severe autism. The findings will motivate teachers, policy-makers and researchers to understand and mediate the gap between current teaching practice and the research in literacy instruction for this population of students.

**Ali khorsandi Taskoh, PhD., Policy**

*The Iranian models of university: With a chronological and comparative eye to the traditional and modern models of Iranian H.E.*

Education in Iran is age-old and enjoys appropriate esteem. From the viewpoint of Zoroastrians, education has been regarded as important as life. Zoroastrians have attached high significance to knowledge and wisdom going so far as to assign an angel called "Chista" to be in charge of education. Today modern models of university are more varied and Western in origin. Other parts of the world with different cultures and insights, especially in the East, have largely remained unnoticed. Historically speaking, for example, Iranian universities have always been considered international and transnational in their entities. It has been historically documented that when the Athenian school was closed in 529 AD, many Greek thinkers and philosophers traveled to Iran. In their pre-Islamic and Islamic models, research and scientific circles enjoyed special importance and Iranian scientists engaged in research and scientific activities along with their colleagues from other lands. Given the cultural and civilizational standing of Iran (taking into consideration the Greater Pars), this paper will present a general view of higher education models experienced in Iran, taking into account both historical and cultural perspectives.

**Anne Watson, PhD., Curriculum***“Men to the Rescue” – The influence of male English teachers on boys’ literacy achievement*

This proposed research study focuses specifically on the call for more male teachers as an approach to improving boys’ literacy achievement. It aims to provide empirical research to either support or challenge claims about the capacity of male English teachers to improve boys’ literacy achievement on the basis of their gender affiliation in the secondary-school classroom. As part of this investigation, this study also intends to illuminate the gender dynamics in play by male teachers who have been homogenously cast as role models for their male students.

A qualitative case-study approach, which involves the use of semi-structured interviews with ten male teachers and twenty male students, as well as classroom observations, as a basis for generating data, will be employed. The perspectives of both teachers and students will be triangulated with the data collected by the researcher who will observe classroom interactions over a period of a month. Teachers who are teaching grade 10 English, given the emphasis placed on students at this level to pass the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test, a graduation requirement in Ontario for all students, will be purposefully recruited. This approach is in keeping with a social constructionist view of knowledge.

**Jessica Wilkins, M.Ed., Counselling Psychology***Exploring help seeking among survivors of women abuse in an educational context*

This study explored the relationship between experience with violence, trauma symptoms, and help seeking among a community sample of women. Criterion-referenced sampling was utilized to select two samples of women who reported experiencing violence enrolled in an adult education program in a large metropolitan city. The results of this study indicate a relationship between women’s reported experience with violence and help seeking. Women who reported experiencing more severe and frequent violence reported accessing a greater number of resources. It is hoped that information gathered in this study can be used to increase our understanding of women’s experience of help seeking, and help reduce barriers for women accessing support following the experience abuse in an educational context.

**Zheng Zhang, PhD., Curriculum**

*A critical postmodern reconceptualization of family literacy programs: Conceptual and methodological considerations*

This study focuses on a critical postmodern reconceptualization of the possible orientations for family literacy programs in North-American context, especially those targeting non-mainstream families from diverse backgrounds. Taking a critical stance, this paper intends to interrogate old modes of thought, affect, and action (Habermas, 1969) in the arena of family literacy programs. Meanwhile, the postmodernist component of this eclectic framework acknowledges the fluid nature of literacy practices and highlights the importance of valuing the diversity of local family literacies and the situatedness of family literacy programs in their specific sociocultural contexts. The major focus lies in how postmodernism insights can “be appropriated within a progressive and emancipatory democratic politics” (Giroux, 2005, p. 43). Adopting a critical postmodernist stance and being aware of the shifting nature of multiple variables germane to family literacy programs, I will focus on documenting parents’ and teachers’ voices of resistance while reconceptualizing the possible orientations for family literacy programs in the North American context, with special attention to those targeting non-mainstream families from diverse backgrounds.

## **ROUNDTABLE PRESENTATIONS - ABSTRACTS**

### **Kerry Anderson, M.Ed., Policy**

#### *Students living in foster care and the Learning to 18 initiatives*

With the goal of increasing graduation rates, children living in Ontario are now required to remain in school until the age of 18 years. Increasing the length of time for mandatory school attendance may pose great difficulty for students who struggle to remain in school and graduate. Students living in foster care have been identified as one of the most vulnerable populations to be at-risk for early school leaving. This study will focus on how students living in foster care are being influenced by the Learning to 18 Policy and initiatives. The research will be conducted using semi-structured interviews with secondary school students currently living in foster care to explore their lived experience of the policy change.

### **Katherine Davidson, PhD., Educational Psychology/Special Education**

#### *Teachers' views of themselves as researchers: A pilot study*

In reviewing the literature on the gap between reading disabilities research and educational practice, I adopted a critical view of the hierarchical, non-reciprocal researcher-teacher dynamic often reported in the literature. Rarely was the knowledge that is produced by teachers recognized as research, and this alerted me to the need to recognize teachers' production of knowledge in my study. Therefore, within the context of my investigation of teachers' uses of research I additionally questioned participants regarding the extent of teachers' participation in conducting research, obstacles to conducting research, and means to facilitate their involvement in research. Ten teachers were individually interviewed. Their responses were analyzed with respect to the three questions underpinning this pilot study. Findings indicated that none of the teachers were actively conducting research within their schools; however, they realized that teachers' record-keeping, assessments, assessment-informed goal setting and instruction all potentially constitute a form of research. The lack of time, support, materials, and professional development were identified as barriers to carrying out research. Addressing the obstacles along with the provision of mentors and assistance from researchers could alleviate the barriers.keeping, all potentially constitute a form of research. The lack of time, support, materials, and professional development were identified as barriers to carrying out research. Addressing the obstacles along with the provision of mentors and assistance from researchers could alleviate the barriers.

**Xiaoxiao Du, PhD., Curriculum**

*It is more than learning a new language: The first-year of schooling for English language learners in Canada*

The multilingual and multicultural demographic features of Canada contribute to the large number of students with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds sitting in Canadian classrooms. According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2009), 45% of immigrants choose to settle in Ontario. It is certainly not a surprise to see a high percentage of English Language Learners (ELLs) in Ontarian primary grade classrooms. What do ELLs say about their first-year learning in Canadian primary grade classrooms? What do mainstream classroom teachers say about these ELLs' English learning at school? What do parents say about their children's first-year learning at school? A qualitative case study was conducted in order to answer the above research questions and have a good understanding of ELLs' learning experience when they newly arrive in Ontarian primary grade classrooms. The data collection included classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, family visits and all the collected data was analyzed through critical interpretational method (Wolcott, 1994). Findings suggested that ELLs faced great challenges and had many frustrations in their first year of learning, yet with appropriate support from teachers, peers and their parents, they do make progress in their English learning and classroom culture transitions.

**Terry Loerts, PhD., Curriculum**

*How do we assess multimodal literacy practices?*

School children often produce texts that adhere to fairly narrowly-defined curriculum standards where pedagogy focuses on traditional print-based, linear texts. Such practices are inconsistent with everyday literacy demands on children who live and work within a dynamic, technologically advanced and multimodal world (Burke & Hammett, 2009). Within this presentation I intend to discuss not only why multimodal literacy practices are valuable but also provide insights based on recent research as to why multimodal practices are inconsistent with everyday literacy demands based on multimodal theory. I will address the issue of assessment and discuss current research highlighting the inconsistency of such practices because schools are still using traditional, print-based, "monomodal" (Vincent, 2006, p. 51) assessment tools that do not take into account the hybrid compositional processes used to make multimodal texts. I will conclude with highlighting the necessary changes that need to take place in order to provide a learning environment that promotes multiple modes of learning and the changes that need to take place in order to assess them fairly. The ultimate goal is to create fair assessments that reflect the creativity of multiple modes that are indicative of the iterative practices of our students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Abdul Malik, M.Ed., Curriculum***Integration of mathematics and science: Views of Ontario elementary school teachers*

This thesis examines the integration of mathematics and science in Ontario elementary school teachers. Its primary purpose is to examine the perceptions of Ontario elementary school teachers in relation to the integration of mathematics and science and effects of integration on students' learning and teaching practices. A case study methodology was used. Employing a demographic survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Six grade 5 and 6 teachers were interviewed regarding a variety of features of integration of mathematics and science. I analyzed the data using Grounded Theory.

All participants appreciated mathematics and science integrated approach. They mentioned that teaching science in connection to mathematics creates more interest and excitement for learning among the students. They have been attempting to integrate mathematics and science in their lessons whenever it is possible. All participants agreed that shortage of time, lack of resources, funds and teacher knowledge of both disciplines are the biggest challenges.

To implement the integration of mathematics and science teaching, teachers need to determine the applicable meaning of 'integration'. Despite teachers willingness to integrate mathematics and science, teachers rarely find suitable opportunities to do so. Teachers need pro-integrate curriculum to implement integration planned lessons.

**Alfred Masinire and Elida Sanchez Cruz, PhD., Gender, Equity, and Social Justice***Student voice and leadership key to student engagement: Reframing the concept and practice in schools in Zimbabwe and Mexico*

In this paper we argue that educators should recognize students' silent voices and students' voices of dissent. In framing our argument, we try to situate the current student voice and leadership in historical perspective. Our argument is not informed by systematic field data but by snippets of our experiences as both students and educators in our countries. We thus take our argument as inconclusive and as a base for a more systematic investigation into personalization in Mexico and Zimbabwe. We recognize the pedagogical imperatives of re-conceptualizing student engagement as a platform for student educational success and bedrock for successful schools. We challenge traditional student voicing and leading strategies as hierarchical, exclusionary and depersonalizing. We present a case about how we transformed the school club session into a vehicle of student voice, leadership and personalization by incorporating and adopting indigenous practices and wisdom to enhance student engagement.

**Vanessa Piccinin, M.Ed., Policy - Leadership***Success from failure? The Ontario secondary school literacy course*

This thesis seeks to develop an informed understanding of the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC) in order to better understand the notion of literacy assessment as a warranted secondary school graduation requirement. To date no major research has been undertaken to specifically examine the implementation and development of the OSSLC. To remedy the void in the current literature I sought the answers to three key research questions: What is it? Why does it exist? Is it working? Findings and conclusions were drawn via an examination of key policy developments, a contextualization of the purpose and scope of the course, and a thematic analysis of interviews conducted with educators and administrators responsible for literacy assessment. It is hoped that an initial critical examination of the OSSLC may encourage, guide and direct further discussion and consideration among key stakeholder groups. Moreover, this thesis tackles the challenges associated with delivering a fair and equitable curriculum that exemplifies the government's expectations for official language testing experiences in graduate studies in Mexico and to describe social and cultural stereotypes that still interfere with the education of those women?

**Elida Sanchez Cruz, PhD., Gender, Equity, and Social Justice***Women in Mexican higher education: Shifting challenges*

Mexico has undergone many changes in recent decades. It has opened its economic borders with the United States and Canada (through NAFTA) and with its Latin American neighbors. In this changing politico-economic context, the student demographics, preferred subject areas, and local practices of higher education have also been altered. Undoubtedly, there has been a transformation in the composition of the student population in institutions of education; according to Bustos (2003), there are now more women in higher education and women have begun to enter into non-traditional female disciplines as well. These students also now represent an increasingly diverse set of backgrounds (i.e. localities, social classes, and abilities). In turn, the diversification in the composition of students in higher education generates new forms of social relations between the sexes, classes and races.

The access of women into graduate studies can lead also to reconsiderations of assigned gender roles and questioning of male spaces. For example, Moreno (2003) studied the experiences of women in the largest University of Mexico (UNAM). She found that there were university male professors that refer to female students in a disrespectful, offensive and discriminatory way for the fact of being women. My study pays attention to the women's experiences in graduate programs particularly in Science and Engineering. My aims are to develop a complex understanding of their experiences in graduate studies in Mexico and to describe social and cultural stereotypes that still interfere with the education of those women.

## **ORAL PRESENTATIONS - ABSTRACTS**

**Amy Cahill, M.Ed., Memorial University of Newfoundland, Curriculum,  
Teaching and Learning Studies: Language and Literacy Education**

*Media literacy programs to prevent body dissatisfaction and eating disorders in adolescents: A comparison of programs*

Pressure on adolescent students from the media to look a certain way is a prevalent problem in today's society. Recognizing and responding to the need to help students learn how to cope with this issue, many researchers have created media literacy programs to help adolescent students become more media literate. Many of these media literacy programs have only been tested in the last few decades and further research can help improve these programs. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the research already established in the hope of understanding the sound empirical evidence obtained as well as the limitations of these studies. This paper specifically explores two separate studies in order to gauge what sound data and limitations resulting from these studies can be gathered. This paper will also supplement other beneficial information from researchers of media literacy programs and related issues pertaining to body dissatisfaction in adolescents.

**Catharine Dishke Hondzel, PhD., Educational Psychology/Special  
Education**

*Practicing theory: A conceptual frame for experiential learning in the arts and social sciences*

The purpose of this research is to expand current understanding of experiential learning outcomes in order to improve post-secondary teaching methods. The paper will focus on how experiential learning programs which include service-learning, community placement, and practicum experiences contribute to the psychological, and social development of students, as well as their individual understanding and retention of course material, as assessed through comprehension of theory and demonstration of learning outcomes (Markus, Howard & King, 1993). It will also provide new insight into exactly how experiential learning methods aid specific students in understanding material, while providing insight into the qualities of students who most benefit from this alternative teaching method.



### **Jane W. Gichuru, PhD., Curriculum**

#### *Meeting the diverse needs of Refugee students in schools*

The aims of this study was to explore the school experiences of refugee secondary school students in Southwestern Ontario, and inform decisions about the effectiveness of intervention programs to support the needs of diverse students in the province are met. This study adapted Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework (1979) as used by Hamilton & Moore (2004) to explain the pre, during, and post-migratory factors which influence the adaptation and learning needs of refugee students, and the strategies required to support these students in their new environment. Drawing on Van Manen's (1988) phenomenological approach, the researcher collected stories of school experience by conducting in-depth interviews with 5 secondary school refugee students. The stories of refugee students' experiences of school were analyzed qualitatively. The following issues were highlighted: placement, additional English language acquisition, teacher's patience, ESL teachers, social and academic support, and the need for specific policies addressing the educational needs of refugee children. While schools alone cannot resolve myriad issues facing communities, they can utilize existing structures and resources to support students with diverse needs. Teachers can seek training to recognize signs of trauma and refer students for appropriate interventions.

### **Bill Irwin, PhD., Policy**

#### *The challenges and issues in designing participant-observer ethnography*

Participant-observation is one of several methods that fit into the category of qualitative research. The strength of participant-observation is that it provides a means to collect data in a naturalistic setting, "providing a level of knowledge that people can communicate about with relative ease" (Dewalt & Dewalt, 2002, p. 1). Participant-observation is both a data collection and an analytical tool (Hammersley & Atkin, 1986; Brewer, 2000; Cassel & Symon, 2004; Wolcott, 2005), creating between the researcher and the researched a tacit understanding of what is happening – making the research *real* (Brewer, 2000). The danger here is how vulnerable the observer can become in these situations (Behar, 1996).

My research focuses on issues surrounding school closures and communities – an issue which participants have great emotional issue with, and one that I have personally history with. While participant-observation will allow for greater rapport and better access to informants and activities (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002, p. 92), a fundamental challenge will be declaring and understanding my role and its impact on the research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Lather, 1986). My presentation will focus on several of the challenges coming forth from this research model including; the insider/outsider issue, the conversational nature of the interview process, the role of the researcher, assuring validity, and reflexivity and analysis.

**Suzanna Kotilehti, M.Ed., Educational Psychology/Special Education**

*Conductive education, A transdisciplinary educational approach for individuals with cerebral palsy*

The objective of this proposed project is to examine the currently used rehabilitation approaches applied in elementary school systems in North America that are aiming to improve the condition of children with Cerebral Palsy. These include speech and language therapy, physiotherapy, and occupational therapy. Secondly, this paper describes a transdisciplinary educational system, Conductive Education (CE), as it applies to working with children with Cerebral Palsy, its history, and the structure of the International Peto Institute-Budapest, Hungary where it originated. A narrative review will be used within a backdrop of CE's principles, and the elements and techniques that distinguish it from other rehabilitation methods teaching individuals with cerebral palsy. The project will investigate various facilitative roles of the approach, such as rhythmic intention, task series, motivation, the role of the conductors-class leader teachers, the simple, multifunctional equipment used. The function of groups and its dynamics, and impact of motivation is also explained. It also makes recommendations for CE to be possibly added to the presently used rehabilitation therapies used in North American public schools.

**Tiffany Ng, M.Ed., Curriculum**

*Investigating the role of heritage language programs in language and cultural maintenance*

My research is concerned with first language (L1) maintenance in a second language (L2) environment, focusing on how immigrant children's involvement in heritage language programs affects language and cultural maintenance. Data from the case study will examine the heritage language programs from three perspectives: 1) administrators and teachers; 2) students; and 3) parents. Participants will be selected randomly from a Chinese Cantonese heritage language program in Mississauga, Ontario. Data collection methods will include semi-structured interviews, participant observation from classroom and family settings, informal conversations, questionnaires, and document analysis. On the macro level, I aim to explore how power relations influence language within society and the classrooms by studying the underlying issues discussed by the administrators and examining current educational policies. On a micro level, I aim to determine how parental and students' attitudes towards the use of L1 in the L2 setting, specifically their attitudes towards heritage language programs in Canada, affects overall language and cultural maintenance. This study will provide insights into the current heritage language programs available in Ontario, Canada intending to alleviate the role of power on language within society, and therefore, altering its view on the use and teaching of minority languages within this multicultural nation.

**Adrienne E. Sauder, PhD., Educational Psychology/Special Education**

*Shifting identity: Changes in gifted adults' self-perceptions of giftedness across the lifespan*

Giftedness may seem to disappear with age, but the gifted identity doesn't. Understanding how gifted individuals' self-perceptions of giftedness change after they leave the education system is an important dimension for educators to consider when working with gifted children in their formative years. This paper is based on insights gained from a phenomenological study investigating gifted adults' understanding of giftedness from first identification to the present. Gifted individuals maintained a static, school-bound definition of giftedness over time, but their self-perception as a gifted individual diminished. A dynamic model of gifted identity is introduced to describe the dimensions that influence the changes in an individual's gifted identity across the lifespan.

**Magdalena Stepien, PhD., Educational Psychology/Special Education**

*Structuring collaboration: Factors affecting prosocial outcomes of cooperative learning*

This research synthesis presents an overview of the restructuring of learning environments—from predominantly individualistic and competitive to more cooperative environments. Over the last four decades, cooperative or collaborative learning (CL) environments have been explored as either an alternative or as a supplement to individualistic and/or competitive environments, primarily with the aim of facilitating: the integration of diverse peers, the fostering of inclusion, the development of interpersonal/social skills, as well as more positive (prosocial) attitudes and behaviours. More recently CL practices have been explored as an avenue for: preventative behaviour management, a practical way of strengthening students' intrapersonal skills (including metacognitive skills of self-management, self-reflection, self-assessment), and academic achievement through scaffolded peer interactions. What has surfaced as critical, within both, practical implementation and within comparative analysis of CL practices, is the large variance in the structure—or lack of structure—of many CL implementations. Certain structural inadequacies have been identified as contributing to limited social outcomes; occasionally, unstructured collaboration has also inadvertently further reproduced harmful classroom dynamics. Thus, my focus will be on clarifying the key structural components of successful collaboration which, once fully implemented, have consistently fostered positive, welcoming, and nurturing environments.

**Ali khorsandi Taskoh, PhD., Policy**

*Interdisciplinarity as a discourse in education and research: With a focus on typological diversity*

“Interdisciplinarity” is a new epistemological structure. It enjoys its own linguistic characteristics and emanates from internal relations among elements of an epistemological system, theoretical structures and social rules of the new discourse of knowledge. The necessity of interdisciplinarity stems from the mysterious spaces, conditions and circumstances which govern social spheres of human life in the age of communication in “knowledge-based” societies and “virtual” worlds. Today, interdisciplinarity has been extended to all institutional fields of knowledge and educational organizations and is a new characteristic of knowledge production and policymaking methods. Despite sporadic reactions and resistances, “interdisciplinarity” is now the focus of attention for institutions producing and distributing knowledge as well as organizational and social spheres of education. The existing literature on interdisciplinary activities has also pointed to various types of interdisciplinary studies. Since any form of interdisciplinary study indicates the quality of understanding of issues which become meaningful in an interdisciplinary environment, this paper will try to explain key characteristics of interdisciplinarity and the most important types.

**Anne Watson, PhD., Curriculum**

*Not just a “boy” problem: An exploration of the complexities surrounding literacy underachievement*

In this presentation, I examine literacy underachievement and how school-based literacies contribute to students’ “at risk” status. It draws on qualitative research conducted in one Ontario secondary school in a working-class community. Five grade nine “at-risk” boys and girls and their teacher were observed and interviewed to illustrate the complex and situated nature of the students’ gendered and classed identities and the disjuncture between the teacher’s in-school and the students’ out-of-school literacy practices. This research found that multiple factors contribute to students’ “at-risk” status and draws attention to the limits of some school-based literacy practices and gender-based reforms, designed to improve achievement.

**Gabrielle Young, PhD., Educational Psychology/Special Education**

*Students' perceptions of attending a demonstration school which  
focused on the use of assistive technology*

This presentation will provide audience members with an understanding of students' use of assistive technology at a demonstration school and how this experience impacted students' self-concept and school motivation. Based on the perspectives of twelve students with severe learning disabilities, interview data will be shared in order to better understand students' use of assistive technology and how it has changed their school experience. More specifically, I will share information surrounding the way in which the technology enables students to complete academic tasks which they previously would not have been able to complete, and the impact this has on the way they feel about themselves. The demonstration school was designed specifically to meet the needs of students with learning disabilities. For the first time, students felt that they were not "alone" in having a disability and students felt like they "belonged" at this school. Students' perceived the demonstration to school to be a supportive learning environment, and their perceptions of this school will be shared. Additional interview data will be shared in order to demonstrate the way in which attending the demonstration school impacted students' self-efficacy, self-concept and school motivation.

## NOTES





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