

Introduction to the Special Issue: Proceedings from the 2017 Atlantic Education Graduate Student Conference

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“To be able to share our experience and knowledge with students and others who might someday apply or extend our teaching and research in schools is exhilarating.” Ann Sherman (UNB, 2010)

The 6th Annual Atlantic Education Graduate Student Conference was held Saturday, June 24th, 2017 at The University of New Brunswick, Faculty of Education. New Brunswick is located on the unceded Wabanaki territory of the Mi’kmaq, Wolastoqiyik, and Passamaquoddy Peoples. As graduate students at the University of New Brunswick, we are grateful for the opportunity to study on the traditional lands of Wolastoqiyik and recognize that all attendees at the AEGSC benefit from the Wolastoqi stewardship of the land.

The aim of this annual conference is to facilitate and promote the sharing of research among graduate students, researchers, educators and communities in the field of education situated within Atlantic Canada. It offers graduate researchers the opportunity to come together to engage with varying perspectives on continuing and emerging issues related to education at all levels, research methods and methodologies, and challenges facing graduate students and educators today. In coming together as graduate students, we seek to provide students an opportunity to hone presentation skills, network, develop their identities, and build community. It was a privilege to be a part of designing a

learning space for becoming academics, which is vital to the creation of community within academia (Braidotti, 2013; Brooks, Franklin-Phipps, & Rath, 2018; Savin-Badin, 2008).

The 2017 program featured presentations from graduate student researchers from many regions of Atlantic Canada. The articles in this special issue are selected proceedings from the conference.

In the first article of this special issue, Adrian Downey examines the intersections between Indigenous identity and white-seeming privilege. Drawing from his Master's thesis, Downey provides the reader with an in-depth exploration of white-seeming privilege through his discussions of methodology and historical context in addition to his personal experiences.

Nancy Matthews also engages with questions of identity in the second article. She discusses three terms she has found to be challenging while negotiating her identity as a graduate student. To examine the nuanced differences between an *intellectual*, an *academic*, and a *researcher*, Matthews draws on the keynote lecture from AEGSC 2016 and engages in dialogue with author Dr. Roger Saul to better understand her place within academia.

In the third article of our special issue, Gregory Hadley takes us on a journey to Nova Scotia. Hadley's piece provides a detailed overview of the state of entrepreneurial education in the province, with a distinct focus on rural regions. His explorations of topophilia, economics, outmigration, and population decline provide valuable context to his argument for increased entrepreneurial and business offerings in rural Nova Scotian schools.

Shari Smith-Ellis turns our attention to mathematics education and the role of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in the fourth article. She recounts her experiences in the classroom, where she and her colleagues developed an assessment tool to improve student performance that saw a notable increase in student engagement. Following this unprecedented growth, Smith-Ellis makes a case for valuing student voices as active participants and collaborators.

In the fifth article, Ashlee Kitchenham explores the educational implications of involvement in formal care systems for young people. She discusses current educational outcomes for youth in care and raises questions regarding the role of environmental influences. Following a review of relevant literature, Kitchenham puts forth recommendations for educators working with youth in formal care to mitigate any negative impact on their schooling.

The following article by Jenny Rowett explores *Etuaptmunk*, the Mi'kmaw word for two-eyed seeing, as an approach to both life and research. In this piece, Rowett negotiates her identity as a non-Indigenous researcher who sees through both Western and Indigenist lenses. Following a review of the literature, she discusses her desire to implement *Etuaptmunk* as a theoretical orientation that will centre Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqey knowledges and help fulfil relational accountability in her doctoral research.

We close this special issue with the keynote address of the conference. Dr. Ellen Rose explores the phenomenon of “post-truth” in the context of educational research. Providing an historical overview of evolving ideas about truth, Dr. Rose engages with questions of politics and contemplates the consequences post-truth may have on research. Presenting four critical implications

for researchers, Dr. Rose encourages graduate students to rise to the challenge and reimagine the nature and purpose of their research in a post-truth era.

We would like to express our gratitude to all researchers who attended the conference in person and by distance. The abundance and diversity of research shared, and the strong attendance speak to the continued importance of opportunities for graduate student researchers across Atlantic Canada to share knowledge and build community.

We wish to acknowledge the many professors within the Faculty of Education at UNB who took the time to attend the conference, chair sessions, and engage with the graduate student researchers. We would especially like to thank our supervisors; whose invaluable support and commitment is integral to our journey as becoming academics.

The conference was made possible by the generous support of the UNB Graduate Education Students Society and the late Dean of the Faculty of Education, Dr. Ann Sherman. We are indebted to Dr. José F. Domene, our faculty representative, for his endless support and guidance. We also wish to extend heartfelt thanks to AEGSC 2017 Co-Chair Sherrie-Lynn Doğurga for her longstanding commitment to the AEGSC, her passion, and her vision.

We would like to extend a special thank you to Elder Lapskahasit Cihkonagc for his presence, his teachings, and for leading the opening ceremony and the closing drum circle. Thanks go to Helen Karavanidou and Jodi Ravn for their efforts in coordinating the proposal review process, and Jen Rowett for her contributions

as emcee. We are also indebted to the many graduate student volunteers who helped throughout the year and on the day of the conference itself.

The 2018 AEGSC will be held on June 23rd at the UNB Faculty of Education in Fredericton. The conference theme is “Learning and Sharing in this Place: The Wabanaki Confederacy.” We look forward to welcoming graduate researchers from across Atlantic Canada and beyond, to present in person and online.

This special issue of *Antistasis* is dedicated to the memory of Dr. Ann Sherman, Dean of Education at the University of New Brunswick. Dr. Sherman’s enthusiastic and unwavering support of the AEGSC and of all graduate students in the UNB Faculty of Education and beyond was immeasurable and she will forever remain an inspiration to us all.

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