

## **Editorial: Timely, Critical and Socially Relevant**

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# Editorial

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## **Timely, Critical and Socially Relevant**

It is with great pleasure and honour that we take up the role of Anglophone co-Editors for CJE. We begin by expressing our gratitude to the former Anglophone co-Editors Nancy Maynes, Blaine Hatt, and Thomas Ryan for their exceptional attention to the integrity and quality of the Journal over the last three years. Nancy Maynes and the CJE Managing Editor Sharon Hu have been exceedingly helpful in maintaining a supportive transition as we consider the priorities of the Journal going forward. We are in a historic time nationally and internationally due to COVID-19, greater awareness of long-standing systemic racism and social exclusions, intensifying climate change, Indigenous resurgence in Canada, and shifting global conflict. Timely, critical, and socially relevant educational research, theory, and analysis are exceedingly important for researchers, leaders and practitioners to respond with insight, clarity and new visions in our complex world. CJE is poised to continue to have an important role in these changing times. Hence, in our vision for the Journal, we are seeking authors whose work is positioned to make an impact in the Canadian educational scene, and have high-interest and relevance across disciplinary areas. We invite you to actively engage with CJE and encourage your submissions. We are looking forward to working with you.

This editorial is our response to this issue's articles that were reviewed and edited by the former co-Editors. We read through the articles with great interest, and at first glance, the articles all appear quite different from each other – with disparate focus, educational levels, and methodologies. As we looked in more depth, however, we observed a common concern and interest in students' lived and felt experiences within diverse

educational settings - from K-12 to doctoral level. The authors raise critical questions while providing new insights into improving current practice and policy in support of student learning experiences and outcomes across Canada, and engage diverse methodologies. We find these different methodologies in fact highlight the ways that educational questions can be approached through different lenses. The different methodologies provide opportunities to engage our educational questions on student experience using different tools, affording a variety of opportunities for deeper and multiple insights.

Lee Airton, Jacob DesRochers, Kyle Kirkup and Lindsay Herriot share unique findings concerning gender expression that offer new possibilities in addressing students' rights in support of gender identity and expression in Ontario K-12 Catholic schools. Their policy analysis of Catholic school documents affirms the unsurprising conclusion that Catholic school boards are not implementing required Ontario legislation on gender identity and expression – most likely due to the tensions of a perceived conflict between the legislation and Catholic doctrine. The authors' analysis reveals a unique and under-examined observation of policy confusion between gender identity and gender expression, and offers a way forward that may enable and possibly encourage Catholic school authorities to implement the legislation without facing an incompatibility with Catholic doctrine.

Riley Oram's article on procrastination of undergraduate students reveals an emergent finding that student procrastination may be due more to the context than individual attributes of the learner. This article will be of high interest to anyone teaching and leading within post-secondary education, but these findings could also be mobilized into K-12 settings in considering student academic motivation quite generally. Using survey methodology guided by Self Determination Theory, Oram finds that students' satisfaction or frustration with regard to their basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness within their academic context may contribute more to procrastination than their academic motivation. Oram suggests that "rather than academic procrastination being a person-centred issue, it may be more related to the environment in which students find themselves procrastinating."

Shannon Hill, Elizabeth A. Ler and Heidi Cramm explore an interesting issue of student experience from military families, which is a grossly underexamined topic in the Canadian context. They share a phenomenological study conducted through individual semi-structure interviews with educators that are working with military-involved students in secondary education. The key issues that face the students are mobility, parental

absences, and anxieties over potential injury/death of parents, but there is little collaboration between military organizations/schools, and professional development for educators to support the educational experience of these students. The authors offer insight into ways that this issue might be generatively and collaboratively approached for the benefit of student experience.

The last two articles are focused on assessment practices, which is a key area of consideration for educators and leaders. Stefan Denis Merchant, Don Klinger and John Kirby look at the complexities of assessment in secondary education outside of academic achievement – often referred to by terms such as work habits, competencies, or skills. In their analysis of report card data in two school districts in Ontario they found that despite six categories within performance standards on assessment of non-academic criteria, teachers are engaging assessment in this area in a unitary way based more on a holistic impression of the student rather than the well-defined constructs. The authors offer insight on the need for professional development for educators who are well-positioned to engage in more developed practice. Finally, John Freer offers an assessment tool for doctoral students to support the preparation of their comprehensive portfolio. Noting a current trend for doctoral students to engage with comprehensive portfolios rather than comprehensive exams, Freer offers a useful assessment tool for comprehensive portfolios that emerged from a partnership of three universities. Theoretically grounded in the literature on the process of scholarship, Freer offers an approach through which doctoral students can use this assessment tool in the development of a more robust comprehensive portfolio which he suggests will support students into and beyond the candidacy requirements of their program.

We hope this collection provides you with a timely opportunity to engage with shared issues of current relevance to the Canadian education community. We look forward to receiving manuscripts that are timely, critical and socially relevant to the Canadian education community as we engage our work as the new Anglophone co-Editors.