

in education Volume 30, Number 2, 2025 Spring/Summer**Editorial**

Kathleen Nolan and Valerie Triggs, *University of Regina*

Hello, and welcome to the 2025 Spring/Summer issue of *in education*! Valerie and Kathleen are so pleased to be reunited again as co-Editors-in-Chief after Kathleen's six-month research sabbatical. Thanks to Gale Russell, who served as interim co-Editor-in-Chief during this time. We have a packed issue for readers, with seven highly educational and stimulating research articles and one book review. We trust you will enjoy each and every contribution.

To ease ourselves out of the summer season, we begin this issue with an article featuring meditative inquiry. In this first article, entitled *Cultivating Awareness, Reverence, and Autonomy in Students: Meditative Inquiry as a Catalyst to Holistic Learning and Living*, **Ashwani Kumar and Shane Theunissen** draw on Dialogical Meditative Inquiry (DMI) to highlight the importance of self for teaching, learning, and living. Through a conversational style of writing, the authors take the reader into the topics of critical reflection, environmental education, meditative inquiry, and reverence for nature, life, and learning. They aim to reveal how the processes of DMI can be used to facilitate learning relationships.

Following from this focus on meditation and learning relationships, we present an article that highlights the concepts of belonging and connection in schools. In *Investigating School Belonging Using Socio-Ecological Systems Theory*, **Tara Poole** offers a literature review on school belonging, illustrating that it is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. In this article, the author draws on Bronfenbrenner's levels of development and ecological systems theory of human development to work toward a comprehensive model of school belonging, which includes strategies for promoting in students a sense of belonging and connection to/in school.

With a slight shift in attention from the belonging and connection of students to that of educators, the next article in this issue explores how educators can nurture their own sense of belonging through collaborative learning communities. In *Collaborating with Critical Friends: Exploring Picture Books Through Self-study in Secondary and Post-Secondary Classrooms*, four researchers and educators, **Carolyn Clarke, Evan Throop-Robinson, Ellen Carter, and Jo Anne Broders**, draw on collaborative critical self-study to explore picture books as a pedagogical tool in secondary and post-secondary institutions. They report several critical findings in relation to how and why specific literature is selected (or not), as well as implications for educators who aim to learn and grow their professional practice through collaborative learning communities.

What better way to learn and grow toward learning communities than to involve students as mathematics mentors in schools? In their article entitled *Strength-Based Pedagogies in Mathematics Education: "I Like Being Your Little Teacher,"* **Kaja Burt-Davies and Annica Andersson** provide a unique perspective on what can be learned when sixth-grade students serve as mathematics mentors for the younger students in their school. With their research data based on observations and interviews, the authors draw on positioning theory and storylines to study how the strength-based, cross-age mentoring process positions these sixth-grade students as mathematics learners. Burt-Davies and Andersson identify several storylines that point to the social and academic value of creating these kinds of learning-focused relationships and contexts, ones that provide meaningful experiences for both mentor and mentee alike.

Maintaining a focus on relationships in schools but shifting focus attention to teachers' experience of reconciliation goals, the article, *7 of 8: Decreased Planning Time as a Barrier to Reconciliation Education* by **Susan Legge** and **Adrian M. Downey**, describes a phenomenological research study designed to explore how ongoing reductions in teacher planning time is impeding progress toward the goals of, and commitment toward, truth and reconciliation in schools. The authors draw on Giroux's idea of educators as transformatory intellectuals to make the point that reconciliatory work in education demands that teachers have time and space to work through "the complex histories and contemporary contexts involved in reconciliation" (Legge & Downey, *this issue*).

The next article in this issue also features the topic of how truth and reconciliation is (or is not) being lived out with the article entitled, *Morality and the Academic Journey: Perspectives of Indigenous Scholars*, contributed by **Frank Deer** and **Rebeca Heringer**. In their study, Deer and Heringer investigate how Indigenous Faculty members understand and acquire moral understandings, including the sources of knowledge from which faculty gather this understanding. The authors argue that genuine reconciliatory efforts must strive to broaden moral conceptualizations. They share perspectives of morality guided by principles stemming from Stonechild's Seven Sacred Teachings, which are not codified perceptions of behaviour but rather cyclical, dynamic, and intercultural understandings. Deer and Heringer's findings stress the importance of incorporating Indigenous perspectives into academic programming and the need for consideration of how Indigenous conceptions of morality are currently present in the academic institution.

Our final research article in this issue ends on a joyful note with *Exploring and Progressing the Concept of Joyful Teaching in Higher Education*, by **Muhammad Asadullah** and **James Gacek**. These authors address the question of 'what makes teaching joyful?' through qualitative research interviews with university faculty. Asadullah and Gacek connect decolonizing teaching praxis with ideas around joyful teaching to suggest that, by placing greater emphasis on joyful teaching in higher education, students can experience transformational learning as evident in their ability to critically reflect and build new perspectives.

To round out this Spring/Summer issue, we offer **Twyla Salm**'s book review of *Teaching Classroom Controversies: Navigating Complex Teaching Issues in the Age of Fake News and Alternative Facts* (2024), written by Glenn Y. Bezalel. Salm presents a careful and thorough account of how author Bezalel seeks to help educators navigate the teaching of controversial issues in the classroom. In addition to providing her 'wish list' for the next edition, Salm commends Bezalel for the creative and intentional ways in which he draws the reader into professional and critical reflection on a range of controversial topics.

We hope you will enjoy reading the richly diverse contributions in this issue. As always, we extend a special note of appreciation to our managing editor, Marzieh Mosavarzadeh, for her excellent manuscript editing and journal production skills. Until the Autumn 2025 issue, we wish you well.