LINK: THE EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDIES GRADUATE SHOWCASE

PROGRAMME

Ryerson University — Faculty of Community Services

Ryerson University — School of Early Childhood Studies, Faculty of Community Services

Ryerson University — Early Childhood Studies MA Alumni Association

Ryerson University — Graduate Studies

R Alumni

CES — Canadian Evaluation Society, Ontario Chapter

ACCESSIBILITY

The Link ECS Graduate Showcase is committed to the principles of equity, inclusion, and accessibility. We aim to create a space that addresses the specific access needs of all conference attendees and presenters.

CONFERENCE TIMETABLE

Time		POD 250	KHW 371
8:30 am	Registration and Breakfast	Registration and Breakfast	
9:00 am	Welcome and Opening Remarks	Welcome and Opening Remarks	
9:15 am	Keynote	Keynote	
10:00 am	Concurrent Roundtables	Roundtable 2	Roundtable 1
10:45 am	Networking Break	Networking Break	Networking Break
11:00 am	Concurrent Presentations	Presentation 2	Presentation 1
12:00 pm	Lunch	Lunch	
1:00 pm	Concurrent Roundtables	Presentation 4	Presentation 3
2:00 pm	Posters	Posters	
2:30 pm	Concurrent Presentations	Roundtable 4	Roundtable 3
3:30 pm	Closing Remarks	Closing Remarks	
4:00 pm	Networking	Networking	
4:30 pm	Adjourn	Adjourn	

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

LINK: The Early Childhood Studies Graduate Showcase will be held on May 12th, 2018 at Ryerson University. Our key objectives are to showcase the extraordinary work of students in the sector of early childhood studies, and to link current/recent ECS students with Ryerson MA in ECS alumni. This conference will offer opportunities to share ideas, present work, and connect with others who are studying or practicing careers in the early childhood sector.

Events will include research paper presentations, round table discussions, poster presentations and mentoring opportunities with MA-ECS alumni.

This conference is a collaborative initiative between Early Childhood Studies Master of Arts graduates of 2017 and the Early Childhood Studies Master of Arts Alumni Association (ECSMAAA). The conference is generously funded by Ryerson University's Faculty of Community Services, the School of Early Childhood Studies, the ECSMA Alumni Association, and the Yeates School of Graduate Studies.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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"Toronto is in the 'Dish With One Spoon Territory'. The Dish With One Spoon is a treaty between the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas and Haudenosaunee that bound them to share the territory and protect the land. Subsequent Indigenous Nations and peoples, Europeans and all newcomers have been invited into this treaty in the spirit of peace, friendship and respect."

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

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Patricia Falope is the founder and CEO of Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI). A prolific educator and researcher, she is an international consultant to UNICEF and heads the ECE leadership team for Nigeria. Her innovative techniques, rooted in respect for cultural values and practices, have led to the development of culturally appropriate curricula and methods that are successful, cost effective and scalable. She introduced play-based learning into the Nigerian public education sector and developed the curriculum for teacher training that has created a paradigm shift in the implementation of pre-primary education across the country. In Canada, her initiative for West African immigrant families in Toronto provides culturally relevant supports to families with young children. Patricia successfully trained Inuit and Cree ECE students across Nunavik for many years and worked with community leaders to advance culturally relevant ECD. She has presented papers at various academic and stakeholder conferences and collaborates with Ryerson University on cross-cultural research in early childhood education. Patricia is an alumnus of Ryerson University's Masters in Early Childhood Studies program.

PROGRAMME

ROUNDTABLE 1
LOCATION: KHW371

Mary Sue

Lexical development in the minority and majority languages of three sequential bilingual kindergartners

This longitudinal study charts the lexical development of three sequential bilingual kindergarteners between the ages of 4 and 6. Their first language, Romanian, was acquired naturalistically at home, and second language, English, was formally introduced in kindergarten. The children's lexical development in English and Romanian was assessed at 5 different points during a 2-year period via the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test 4 (PPVT-4) (Dunn & Dunn, 2007) and a specially adapted PPVT4 for Romanian. The children's lexical repertoires were further divided into home versus school and cognate versus non-cognate categories (Bialystok, Luk, Peets, & Yang, 2010). In addition, since no database of lexical items acquired by monolingual Romanian children exists, the Romanian PPVT4 was administered to 22 monolingual Romanian children aged 6.
The findings indicate that: (i) the bilinguals' receptive vocabulary in English was below average upon joining kindergarten and above average two years later; (ii) their lexical growth in Romanian was steady; (iii) words from a home register were known to an equal extent in English and Romanian, while academic words were better known in English; and (iv) there was no definitive evidence of cognate facilitation, despite the fact that Romanian and English share numerous Latin-based items. We should note that there is some consensus in the literature that very young children do not recognize cognates as easily as their older counterparts (Kelley &Kohnert, 2012).A comparison of the monolingual and bilingual Romanian repertoires reflects possible lifestyle and cultural differences between the groups. The Romanian children, for example, were more familiar than their Canadian counterparts with items related to home building, such as, şmirghăluieşte ("sanding") and mistrie ("trowel"), or items probably learned in school, such as, foca ("walrus") and broascăţestoasă ("tortoise").

Tara Johnston

A Mixed-Methodological Study Examining a Literacy Intervention for Struggling Readers

This study explored academic achievement change and development in children with reading difficulties over the months of May and June, 2017. More specifically, a spring literacy program called The Spring Reading Program, offered by the Learning Disabilities Association of the Niagara Region, was examined. A mixed methodological approach was utilized for quantitative achievement data and qualitative interviews with student tutors, children and caregivers whose children participated in the program. Seventeen children, ages 6-13, were administered a series of pre and post-testing reading-based measures, as well children, student tutors and parents were interviewed individually where responses to nine prepared questions were recorded and later transcribed. Results of the study indicated that The Spring Reading Program help to alleviate reading disabilities and support further literacy development in vulnerable readers. Such findings hold important implications for policy and practice surrounding models of schooling and programming that support children's learning yearlong.

ROUNDTABLE 2
LOCATION: POD 250

Sukyoung Hong and Sally Lindsay

Development of play and STEM skills among children with disabilities in
HB FIRST® robotics program

Background: Play is an important component of a child's development that can help to foster self-determination, decision-making, and problem-solving skills. Exploring the development of play is important because limited play in early childhood can lead to social isolation and low self-esteem. Children with disabilities often have fewer opportunities to engage in meaningful play compared to typically developing children. One promising play-based intervention is through LEGO® robotics which embeds technology into a playful activity. Objective: To understand the development of play and pediatric volition (i.e., the volitional behaviors demonstrated by each child during each robotics workshop) among children with disabilities engaged in an adapted robotics program to enhance STEM skills. Methods: This study uses a mixed method design with pre- and post- workshop surveys (asking about STEM-skills), video recorded and structured observations of each workshop. The program involves six sessions (once per week for two hours) where children learn to design and build LEGO® robotics models; explore challenges facing today's scientists; engage in team activities; and participate in a celebration event with a partner and a skilled volunteer.

Michelle Janzen

Withdrawal of Daily Physical Activity as a Form of Punitive Measures Toward Students with Special Needs; A Case Study

This study examines how educators often use the withdrawal of daily physical activity such as recess and physical education as a punitive tactic to dissuade perceived maladaptive behaviour of special needs students, despite the enormous benefits of physical activity that when used appropriately, can be used as an effective and evidence based strategy to quell maladaptive or disruptive behaviour within the school setting. The study examines through a case study approach the interactions between a young boy with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and other comorbidities and the detailed daily notes of his teacher how perceived maladaptive behaviour was handled with the findings showing removal of daily physical activity as a go to punitive tactic, despite evidence that physical activity had been shown to decrease behaviours within the classroom. The study examines the broader implications of the use of withdrawal of daily physical activity and connects this to a larger ongoing study examining the experiences of students with complex needs within the special education system in Ontario.

Chantal Chevarie

Impacts of child-related animal assisted therapy: Exploring perspectives of parents, educators and service-dog handlers

The purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of parents, educators, and service-dog handlers regarding the impacts of animal-assisted therapy on the development of children (0 – 12 yrs.) with disabilities. Four participants were interviewed to explore experiences of working with children with service dogs and/or related animal-assisted interventions in an early learning environment. The researcher sought to understand impacts which supported children's development, as well as barriers which inhibited service dogs from entering various learning environments. Results indicate that service dogs provide children an increase in opportunities to develop empathy, socio-emotional regulation and empowerment in their learning. Further Ministry of Education policies should be developed to support the integration of service dogs into all early years programs.

PRESENTATION 1
LOCATION: KHW371

Shailja Jain

Queering the Early Childhood Environment: Gender, Identity, and Educator Responsibility

During the early years, children are often constructed as vulnerable and as having little role in the formation of their own identities. This opinion is especially prevalent when discussing gender identity formation within the context of early childhood. In reality, children have a fairly comprehensive understanding regarding their own sexuality and sexual development. Children are, however, often subjected to biased environments that perpetuate social norms and reproduce hegemonic and heteronormative discourses. Under these circumstances, adults, including parents, teachers, and other caregivers are given the large responsibility of ensuring that they act in the best interest of the children in their care. Despite this, often times parents and guardians will act in their own best interest or what they think is best and that does not always represent what is right for that particular child. This provides a challenge, particularly in the early childhood classroom. Early Childhood Educator's (ECEs) are often the caregiver that spends the most time with a particular child. In this context, ECEs are responsible for fostering an environment where children are free to explore and develop their identities. This paper will examine how understandings of gender, masculinity/ femininity, and social norms inform the early childhood environment. It will also explore educator responsibility in terms of supporting children with their discovery of gender and identity. This work is still in progress and will be completed in the format of an MRP.

Ameera Ali

Social Research with Children: A Qualitative Study Exploring Children's Perceptions of Gender

This presentation will discuss my Master's research which focuses on the perspectives of kindergarten children regarding their perceptions of gender appropriateness of play materials. This was a small qualitative study which sought to provide an opportunity for children to employ their competence, agency, and autonomy and have their voices heard. This study focuses on the perspectives of six kindergarten children who were interviewed regarding their conceptions of gender appropriateness of play materials. Implications of my results as well as pedagogical recommendations for educators working with children are provided. Additionally, I will discuss the valuable contributions that children can make when provided opportunities to participate in social research. I argue that it is imperative to include children as primary and active participants in research that investigates phenomena related to childhood subjectivities. I would like to emphasize and differentiate the distinctions between conducting research with children as opposed to conducting research on children. I will briefly discuss my own experiences in conducting research with children and both the advantages as well as limitations of this.

PRESENTATION 2
LOCATION: POD 250

Laura Feltham

Exploring pedagogical practices for engaging boys in ballet

The research explores the pedagogical practices employed by ballet instructors for engaging boys in ballet. It also examines inclusion practices for gender non-conforming children in ballet, using principles of inclusion to make recommendations for instructors to employ with all children. Four current ballet instructors shared their experiences in semi-structured interviews. An overarching finding involved the role of parents in engaging boys in ballet and in creating more inclusive practices. Findings indicate that parent education is needed for more boys to be presented with ballet as an option. With regard to teaching practices involving gender non- conforming children, participants noted the need for parents to support an inclusive environment, and be open to their child's gender expression in order for inclusive practices to be implemented. The paper presents recommendations for ballet instructors to create more welcoming environments for all students and suggestions for implementing gender-inclusive practices based off of the findings from this study.

Michael Butac

LGBTQ parents' experiences with early years environments

This phenomenological study explores LGBTQ parents' experiences in seeking and in being part of early years environments, such as family support programs and childcare services, in Toronto, Ontario. Past literature has shown that heteronormativity plays a significant role in early years environments, thereby, silencing other sexualities. This silencing of sexual minorities adds an additional layer to the process of seeking an early years environment, which involves assessing LGBTQ inclusion of such environments. Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with LGBTQ parents to compare their experiences to the literature, and to consider implications for future practice and policy. The sample was found to have generally positive experiences. Collaboration was an important factor in creating more positive experiences for parents. Future research should consider further inclusion of bisexual, transgender, and queer individuals specifically, in order to continue to better understand their experiences in early years environments and build upon the knowledge gained here.

PRESENTATION 3
LOCATION: KHW 371

Madison Banks

Perspectives on Child Development: Voices of Young Mothers

Child development is shaped by a multitude of factors. This study employs the values of family-centered practice in order to explore young mothers' feelings and experiences in regard to child development. Semi-structured interviews with mothers, aged 14 to 21, were used to collect information about a) what young mothers consider to be the most significant factor contributing to child development, and b) what their perceptions and experiences have been in regard to the developmental screening tool, the Ages and Stages Questionnaire. This tool is being used more and more in childcare, family resource and medical settings, especially with populations such as young parents who are deemed 'at risk'. It has received both positive and negative critiques, and while research has considered the screening tool in relation to children's developmental outcomes, it has not been considered from the perspective of the parent. The study is grounded in critical theory taking into account the social, historical and ideological factors that contribute to the experiences of young mothers. Thematic analysis will be used in order to identify and describe patterns among mothers' responses to the research questions. This study will act as a platform to include the voices of young mothers in research and to inform future considerations for programs that provide services for young mothers.

Haniya Mohamed

The Niqab in Early Childhood Education and Care ECEC Settings, why should it be included? An Anti-islamophobia Perspective in ECE

On October of 2017, the province of Quebec passed Bill 62 becoming the first Canadian province to ban the wearing of a face veil when providing and receiving publically-funded services, including childcare. Scholarly literature examining the practice of face-veiling in workplace settings, let alone early childhood education and care settings is limited if not non-existent. Furthermore, literature examining 'burqa ban' laws in European countries affirm the laws are based solely on neo-orientalist and postcolonial assumptions made about face-veiled Muslim women with no empirical research supporting claims that face-veiled Muslim women pose a threat to the security of Western nations or Western values of secularism and gender equality. Yet, in educations institutions across Europe, and the Canadian province of Quebec, face-veiled educators and students have been wrongfully dismissed or expelled for refusal to unveil, citing their refusal to remove the face-veil hinders communication, compromises children's safety and Western values of secularism. Using an autoethnographic approach, I aim to use my experiences working with young children in ECEC settings to explore the idea of how the visibility of a face-veiled early childhood educators can contribute towards an Anti-Islamophobia space in ECEC settings.

PRESENTATION 4
LOCATION: POD 250

Alana Powell
Ethical Caring in the Policy Process: Exploring a caring model of collaborative governance

What does it mean to govern with care? How can governments ensure responsiveness and attentiveness, as they take responsibility (and exercise power) over the well-being of citizens? These critical questions will be explored as we consider the ethics of care as a moral foundation and practice in policy development. Grounded in the work of Tronto (1993) who defines ethical care as an "activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible" (p. 103), the moral values of responsiveness, attentiveness, competence, responsibility, and trust and solidarity will be considered as the foundation of ethical caring practices (Tronto, 2013). Beginning with an exploration of the tensions between the ethics of justice, rights, and care within the realm of the political, the ethics of care will be asserted as the necessary foundation for governments action or inaction. Drawing on the work of Tronto, Sevenhuijsen, and Barnes, ruptures, potentials, and the place of listening, trust, dialogue, and citizenship will be explored. Finally, a caring model of collaborative governance will be presented, situating care as both moral value and practice in the policy development process.

Emma Mogyorodi
Winter Boots: Complicating the ethics of care through assemblage theory and new materialism in an everyday encounter

This presentation explores the ways in which layering theories of assemblages with new materialism challenges dominant interpretations of the feminist ethics of care. To illustrate this phenomenon, I present my arguments with a case study of an interaction between myself and my young son. In this example, his resistance to wearing boots on a cold winter day shows the complexities of navigating ethical and caring choices within assemblages of human and more-than-human forces, including children's autonomy and discourses of good mothering. While much of the feminist ethics of care literature focuses on human interactions, the addition of assemblages and posthumanist frameworks invites a deeper understanding of the many components that underlie ethical decision-making in adult-child-material relationships. Temporal-spatial considerations further complicate matters, inviting a consideration of how caregivers might balance present needs with future consequences, particularly when ethical dilemmas unfold and are observed in public spaces. In this session, participants will be invited to reflect upon and share their own experiences of navigating ethical choices in everyday situations.

POSTERS
LOCATION: POD 250

Nancy Chahine and Sara Sanchez

A Critique of the Assessment for Quality Improvement Document: Use of Inclusion

The Assessment for Quality Improvement (AQI) measures the quality of early year environments in Toronto, based on the city's expectations and definitions of quality (Toronto Children's Services [TCS], 2014). As diversity in Toronto is so present, inclusion should be a crucial component of quality in educational settings. This paper employs feminist and decolonizing lenses to analyze the AQI, as they present critical perspectives on issues of inclusion and diversity. The AQI document is divided by thirty-one categories to measure quality in the preschool classroom. However, only the seven categories which explicitly measure inclusiveness were critiqued. Findings suggest that the AQI fails to be inclusive of children's intersecting identities and employs tokenistic methods for ensuring inclusion. Therefore, the document lacks an understanding of inclusion as a complex and vital concept, and consequently does not reflect true inclusion. Recommendations include demanding continuous reflection of inclusion throughout all aspects of preschool settings, curriculum, and educator practices.

Sophia Mohamed

Advocacy: What does it mean? Why engage in it? And is it worth it?

The purpose of this study was to understand the importance of advocacy education in pre-service early childhood programs and to explore the connection of said targeted education on educators' commitment to advocacy. This study explored concepts of professional identity, and, professionalization and the advancement of the early years' sector. Participants phenomenological perspectives were obtained via an online survey. Participants were recruited from 18 Ontario colleges and universities and included 14 pre-service educators and 38 in-service educators. The findings point to the need for the inclusion of more in depth advocacy courses in pre-service programs across Ontario, as the study highlights that educators entering the sector display a disconnect between theory and practice when it comes to the value of early years' advocacy.

Rashin Lamouchi

The Effects of Unionization in the Early Childhood Education Workforce

Research has demonstrated that unionization improves remuneration, benefits, and job stability. The present study qualitatively explored the impact of unionization on early childhood educators (ECEs) through semi-structured interviews. Three unionized and three non-unionized ECEs across Ontario participated. Results suggest unionization is a tool providing negotiation opportunities that impact work conditions, promote workplace equality, and improve professional status and job ownership. Non-unionized participants view unions as facilitators of communication with employers, while union members report that they are often referred back to principals for conflict resolution. Professional status and work conditions are reported to be union and workplace specific. Further research is needed to examine differences between union contracts, and how to strengthen educator salary and professional status.

Juliana Serna

Children;s Rights: An Analysis of Ontario's Kindergarten Curricula From 1998-2016

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (1989) states that all children are rights holders and these rights should be a priority for the State. Canada ratified the UNCRC in 1991; however, compared to other wealthy countries Canada is still lagging behind regarding children's rights education (Jerome et al., 2015). This study employed a discursive analysis approach to examine how and to what extent children's rights have been integrated in the Ontario's kindergarten curricula from 1998 to 2016. The documents (OME, 1998, 2006, 2010/2011, 2016), were analyzed using the UNCRC General Principles (Articles 2, 3, 6 and 12) (United Nations, 2005) as pre-established criteria (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 390). Furthermore, Article 31: the Right to Play, is also discussed in the findings as it arose from the data. The findings showed that the integration of children's rights in the curricula has increased since 1998; however, children's rights are not thoroughly incorporated in the documents.

May Lin

Supporting the Development of Mathematical Knowledge and Confidence in Pre-Service Early Years Educators

Beginning educators take into their teaching practice the content and pedagogical knowledge developed in their education programs and these perceptions inherently inform their practice. This study examines if and how student engagement in an early year's math concepts and methods course can influence pre-service early years educators' (PSEYE) mathematical knowledge and confidence. It follows a mixed method approach as it considers: 1) if and how PSEYEs' math knowledge develops; 2) if and how PSEYEs' confidence as math educators changes; and 3) what curricular and pedagogical approaches to teaching PSEYEs best supports the development of their math knowledge and confidence. Along with supporting course development, this study provides important insights into how PSEYEs' developing math knowledge and confidence can be best supported in math concepts and methods course curriculum and pedagogy. Findings can in turn help to strengthen the math teaching of beginning early years educators.

Leah Brathwaite

Parent and Provider Perspectives on the Benefits of Home Child Care

In Canada, 98% of parents report being satisfied with their childcare arrangements, yet home child care (HCC), one of the top three choices for care, is consistently rated as lower quality than centre-based programs. The small amount of research conducted on HCC programs has typically been conducted in comparison to centre-based programs. The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the benefits of HCC from the perspectives of parents and providers. Interviews with one provider and two parents revealed that flexibility, caring relationships, and connections to communities were significant benefits of HCC. These findings indicate a need for the development and use of more nuanced program quality evaluation methods which capture these important process quality elements of HCC.

Stephanie Galea

Effects of ADHD on math performance when present in school aged children

The purpose of this literature review is to identify some of the risks that school aged children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are exposed to. In comparison to typically developing students, research supports that children with ADHD have higher risks and face more challenges with math performance than their typically developing peers. Some of the risks included are poorer academic performance and lower rates of homework completion. Challenges can include sustained attention and deficits to memory. It is important to look at the this research because knowing the risks and challenges that are associated between math performance and children with ADHD can help educators have a better understanding of how to help support these students within a classroom environment.

ROUNDTABLE 3
LOCATION: KHW371

Gina Jibran

Cross-Cultural Therapeutic Measures for Children with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

This research paper explores cross-cultural variances of therapeutic measures provided for children who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to shed light on how Canada can best provide therapy for recently-migrated Syrian child refugees who suffer from, or are susceptible to develop, PTSD. The research question this paper investigates is: How should Canada provide therapy for Syrian child refugees with PTSD? The literature review in this paper covers cross-cultural interpretations of therapy, mechanisms of support for children, and the role of adults and children throughout therapeutic measures. Several studies carried out across multiple nations are examined to gain an understanding of the similarities, differences, and significance of how therapeutic measures for children with PTSD vary on a global scale. The implications for practitioners section is based on cross-cultural findings and calls attention to the Canadian government, policy-makers, and organizations, to consider the complexity of therapy, cultural-sensitivity, cross-cultural practices, and children's context from which they have migrated from and currently reside in. Findings within this paper enables Canada to become better equipped to suitably provide therapeutic measures for children suffering from, or susceptible to develop, PTSD.

Elaine "Queenie" Cagulada

Acoustic Ecology and the Health of Urbanized Children: A Narrative Review on the Effects of Noise Pollution

How often do we stop and reflect on everyday sounds in our lives and their effect on our perceptions of place? Once we interpret the sounds we hear as both dynamic and interconnected, we encounter an acoustic ecology. Paine (2017) tells us that acoustic ecology indicates the health of the environments in which sound occurs. Noise pollution, as is the case with other forms of pollution, plays a key role in determining the health of environments. This paper is a working narrative review aiming to further delve into the effect of noise pollution on public health, especially on the health of our children situated in urban settings, through the lens of acoustic ecology. I endeavour to answer questions such as: How do humans as well as living non-humans hear place? What is the relationship between sound and place? Finally, how can acoustic ecology impact ecocentric pedagogy and practice? Implications of this review suggest that we re-assess the relationship between place and sound, reflecting closely on the influence noise pollution has on the health of our children and encouraging further critical inquiry in the area of acoustic ecology and early childhood.

Dragana Mirkovic and Barbara Pytka

Meditating Ideas of Spirituality & Education

In this presentation based on acknowledging children's spirituality, the ideas presented are founded on the idea that the "whole child" approach often excludes or neglects the acknowledgment of children's spirituality in various learning environments. The presenters focus on two key areas. First, Mirkovic focuses on meditating ideas of what children's diverse meanings of spirituality may be and look like, not only in terms of religious-spirituality, but also in relation to nature, holistic living and education, energy, love, and various emotions. Second, Pytka focuses on examining key approaches to welcoming spirituality into the classroom, concentrating specifically on how educators can create environments that allow children to express their unique spirituality, while also creating space for the educators to foster their own spirituality. In conclusion, the presenters advocate for the collaboration of education and spirituality, based on various research that demonstrates the benefits of fostering children's spirituality in and outside of the classroom environment.

Naomi-Ruth Weersooriya

The Impact of Adult Stigma on Children's Mental Health

Parents and educators often lack the preparedness to respond to mental health challenges in young children and often rely on personal misconceptions or individual biases. The purpose of the present study was to explore the relationship between stereotypes, stigma, and assumptions held by parents and educators with regard to children's mental health (CMH). Eighteen Registered Early Childhood Educators and seventeen parents responded to a survey that included vignettes that explored participants' assumptions and knowledge of CMH. Over half of both parents and educators felt underprepared to support CMH, highlighting the importance of the need for improved training for educators, as well as increased public education for parents. Further research should explore the impact of negative assumptions and stigma on CMH.

ROUNDTABLE 4
LOCATION: POD 250

Meghan Hayward

Children's Embodiment of a Land Ethic

In A Sand County Almanac (1949), Aldo Leopold asks the reader to review and expand her understanding of community to one that is inclusive of all elements – soils, waters, plants, and animals – that make up our natural world and he identifies this collective as the land. His land ethic calls for a change in our role in our community, "from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it" (p. 240), and a respect of all community members and the inherent relationship between them. Our research question grew from Leopold's notion of the land, and how the land and a land ethic are understood by elementary school children. We ask: How do children engage with and think about the land? Within their school garden and community, the children demonstrate observation and knowing, thinking and feeling, and caring for the land and people. Young children recognize the land. Let's follow their lead and centre our curriculum and instruction on those understandings. Imagine an education guided by a land ethic.

Caitlin Wood

Young Community Members' Participation in Envisioning Community Change

It is vitally important that Indigenous Youth are provided a forum to express and share their unique expertise and profound knowledge on all matters that affect and impact their lives. Through the use of photo-voice, this qualitative study provided the space for eleven youth from the Northern Village of La Loche, Saskatchewan to share their perspectives on their community, their lives, and how childhood should be conceptualized. Employing the theoretical frameworks of Sociology of Childhood, children's rights, Indigenous culturally responsive method and a desire-centred research framework, four over-arching themes emerged; the importance of: i) relationships; ii) health and well-being; iii) knowledge; and iv) community and culture. The youth in this study demonstrated their enormous capacity to identify and share their unique perspectives on their community and proficiencies in assessing their community's strengths and challenges – further demonstrating that youth are not merely passive subjects of social structures, but competent citizens able to contribute to change in authentic ways.

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

A note to all conference participants and volunteers:

The LINK conference has the potential to fit into an RECE's individual CPL plan in many different ways depending on the priority areas that the RECE has identified. Documenting learning for a portfolio could talk the shape of:

- A written reflection on a session/keynote or a resulting discussion with a colleague;
- Copies of the presentations/papers;
- Pictures of the posters;
- Links or other resources that were provided at the conference; and/or
- Participation certificate (note: WHICH IS NOT necessarily needed for participants to include in their learning plan)

Following each session and during breaks we encourage participants/volunteers to engage in critical reflective group dialogue. This is the goal of the CPL program as it fosters deeper engagement and learning, while positively influencing an RECE's professional practice. We will do our best the build in some time during the conference where participants/volunteers can jot down thoughts using their own methods or using a list of provocations which might prompt the thinking process.

EVALUATION SURVEY

Thank you for participating in the inaugural LINK: The Early Childhood Studies Graduate Showcase at Ryerson University on May 11th (pre-conference) and May 12th, 2018. We are hoping to learn more from you about how the conference went and how we can improve it in the future through this quick survey.

Please scan the QR code or type in the URL on a device to open the survey. If you prefer or require a paper copy, please let us know. Organizers will also have devices available, if needed.

FUNDING

Organizing Committee
Abneet Atwal
Nicola Maguire
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