



35TH ANNUAL
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POSTER SESSION

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2023

DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN PSYCHOLOGY: AN OVERVIEW OF A NEW TEXTBOOK FOR EMERGING AND EXPERIENCED SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

01

Anusha Kassan with Roy Moodley

The University of British Columbia

This book is designed to offer a critical perspective on the ways in which psychology is practiced in the context of a multi-faceted society (i.e., multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-faith, multi-sexual, multi-racial, multi-gendered, multi-abled, and their intersections). Through an examination of several clinical vignettes, the theory and practice of diversity and social justice offer a critical analysis of the cultural, historical, and socio-political context within which psychology is practiced. Essentially, the book seeks to define and locate critical diversity and social justice case studies within the broader historical, economic, social, and political contexts of mental health care.

This book advances the understanding that ethnic group and race categories in themselves are useful but limited without the inclusion of the intersectionality of the Group of Seven (Big 7) identities and beyond (gender, race, class, sexual orientations, disability, age, religion, etc.), as clinical dimensions of wellness and psychological transformation. Key concepts such as multiple and intersecting cultural identities and social locations, power, stereotyping, discrimination, prejudice and oppression will be explored through various point of entry (e.g., women, individuals who have been racialized and minoritized, FNMI peoples, 2SLGBTQAI+ communities, clients with disabilities, and other groups that have been socially and politically marginalized).

This book offers school psychologists broader socio-political perspectives on the real-world conditions, context, and systems that impact their work in various settings across multiple roles. Further, the case studies discussed in each chapter provide emerging and experienced school psychologists who want to increase attention to diversity and social justice in their work.

SUPPORTING NEWCOMER STUDENTS AT SCHOOL: RESEARCH-DRIVEN RESOURCES FOR SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS

02

Linnea Kalchos with Anusha Kassan

The University of British Columbia

Newcomer youth are increasingly present in secondary schools across British Columbia yet support for school psychologists working with this community who is navigating the process of school integration (along with their families) is limited (Grunewald et al., 2014). School integration is the academic, social, emotional, relational, familial, and communal adjustment of newcomer youth both inside and outside of the school setting (Gallucci & Kassan, 2019). This phenomenon captures the range of migration experiences of newcomer students in the school setting, including

classroom behaviour, academic performance, peer relationships, identity negotiation, involvement in the school community, and familial adjustment (Kassan & Mukred, 2022). School psychologists play a key role in supporting their positive integration into the school system, and as such, we have developed resources to help them in their work with newcomer youth. These resources were developed based on the results of a two-year arts-based engagement ethnography, in which eighteen newcomer youth were invited to participate in individual interviews, and focus groups, and develop artifacts using cultural probes (maps, drawings, artwork, photography) to share their experiences of school integration (see Kassan et al., 2020). Specifically, we have developed a brochure resource for school psychologists, teachers, and administrators. Providing school psychologists with tools to support and advocate newcomer youth in their schools promotes inclusive, culturally responsive practices to support school integration (Kalchos, Kassan, & Ford, 2022). During this presentation, these brochures will be discussed and distributed to conference attendees.

SUCCESSFULLY START ALL KIDS READING AND AVOID READING DELAYS

03

Linda Siegel with Lisa Sturdy and Audrey Ple

Teaching The Way they Learn Corp (Play Roly)

Learning phonemic awareness, including hearing individual letter sounds in words, blending them, and associating letters with sounds, are developmental milestones essential to kids learning to read. Reading research has shown wide variation in phonemic awareness development at ages 3 to 5. It is estimated that 25% of children fail to grasp these critical skills in early elementary classroom settings, which leads to reading delays and learning challenges.

Play Roly is a fun free online activity consisting of 26 sing-along videos for kids 3 to 5 years old. Played one-on-one with parents or teachers, Play Roly helps children learn in an age-appropriate manner, setting them up for reading success, and boosting confidence.

In our poster session, we share a coherent set of early childhood educational expectations for children ages 3 to 5 and demonstrate how 100% of untrained mothers successfully used Play Roly's simple techniques to teach their children (ages 3.5 to 5.75) the blending of phonemes at home. Mothers engaged in Play Roly's short daily videos, rolling a ball back and forth and singing along to Roly's musical language of letter-sounds. They repeated the videos as often as their child needed to blend Roly's three sounds and understand Roly. Children learned at their own pace, while spending fun, meaningful one-on-one time with their mother.

Play Roly is especially important for the most vulnerable children. By overcoming the barriers to learning to read age-appropriately, Play Roly offers all children the opportunity to achieve their goals, develop their full potential, and participate successfully in society.

Cale Holmes

University of Calgary

Autistic persons experience various social impairments that can contribute to negative outcomes. One possible way to address these impairments is via social intervention programs. One such program is the Program for the Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS), designed to teach autistic adolescents numerous social skills that can be beneficial to their school and life experience. Despite an abundance of research describing the positive outcomes of PEERS, there appears to be no research reporting on the lived experience of the program for those who complete it. The current study used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to understand these lived experiences. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five participants who had recently completed PEERS. Following transcription, individual emergent and group superordinate themes were identified. Superordinate themes included discussion of topics such as developing skills, in-program features, following social rules, difficulty in social situations, trying to fit in, and being passive about providing feedback. Implications of these findings and future study directions are explored.

Kim Corrigan

The University of Calgary

School is an integral part of children and adolescents' daily lives and impairments in school functioning can significantly impact their future. School functioning typically includes measures of academic achievement, attendance, and social belonging within the school environment. Students who are struggling with their mental health are at risk for poor school functioning. Understanding school functioning for students with psychological disorders can help school psychologists support these students. Most school functioning research related to mental health has focused on externalizing disorders or general internalizing symptoms such as depression and anxiety. There is limited research on school functioning for students with other psychological disorders, such as Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and Bulimia Nervosa (BN). OCD and BN have high comorbidity and the peak age of onset for both disorders is during adolescence, when youth are in high school. Despite both disorders typically manifesting at an age when youth are still in school, the potential impacts of OCD and BN on school functioning are rarely discussed. This poster session will present a review of the literature on school functioning for adolescents with OCD and or BN. Understanding school functioning in these populations may aid school psychologists in supporting these teens whether they are encountered in areas of assessment, intervention, or consultation.

SCHOOL AND APPLIED CHILD PSYCHOLOGY AT UBC: THE NEXT GENERATION AND A COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

06

Laurie Ford with Thomas Schanding, Anusha Kassin, Melanie Nelson, Simon Lisaingo, Allison Cloth, Yuan Jiang

University of British Columbia

Established in 1964, the SACP program at UBC is the only School Psychology program in our province. Many members of BCASP and school psychologists in the BC are graduates of the program with a proud identity as UBC graduates. The program has undergone many changes in its nearly 60 years. With a strong history of master's level training, in 2012 the program became the second school psychology program accredited by CPA. Recent years have been an exciting time of renewal in our work preparing the next generation of school psychologists. The Program is committed to the development of professional psychologists whose research, training, and practice promotes the educational and psychological well-being of children and youth, families, and communities in a diverse society following a scientist-practitioner model through a critical lens, with emphasis on the integration of research, theory, clinical skills, and training that encompasses academic, cognitive, social, and behavioural domains. Students receive training in the integration of assessment, consultation, prevention, and intervention and in relevant professional, legal, social, and ethical issues in a variety of contexts. Science and practice are viewed as interactive and complementary. The Program focuses on individual, group, and systems level processes throughout the program. A strong emphasis is placed on working within and across systems and on systemic change in a society that is ever-changing in terms of its cultural, ethnic, social, political, and economic context. The purpose of this session is to reintroduce school psychologist in BC to the SACP program at UBC.

UNDERSTANDING THE LINGUISTICALLY VULNERABLE: EXPLORATION OF WRITING SKILLS OF ELL ELEMENTARY STUDENTS IN CALGARY

07

Samantha Thomson

The University of Calgary

English Language Learners (ELLs) are an increasing presence in Canadian schools. However, little research has been done to examine certain skills of ELL students, such as written expression. The purpose of this study was to explore contributing factors to ELL students' writing quality. The present study gathered written samples from ELL students from Western Canadian elementary charter schools. Students' expressive vocabulary was also assessed using a norm-referenced measure. Factors such as vocabulary, printing quality, and spelling skills will were considered in this study. It was determined that vocabulary was a significant contributor to overall writing quality of ELL students. More specifically, lexical reach and vocabulary diversity were the greatest contributors. These findings have important implications for educators and school districts to consider when teaching written expression to ELL students, ensuring they receive equitable education.

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGE OF APPROPRIATE AND RESPONSIVE ASSESSMENT OF LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE LEARNERS

08

Laine Jackart with Laurie Ford, Thomas Schanding

University of British Columbia

It is no secret that Canada has two official languages, but despite its rich linguistic diversity, limited direction exists in Canada to help psychologists in their attempts to best assess linguistically diverse individuals. The province of Newfoundland/Labrador's Department of Education has published guidelines and a framework for the comprehensive assessment of English Language Learners (ELL) and students from diverse cultures. The guidelines build upon Cummins' linguistic interdependence hypothesis which holds that basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive-academic language proficiency (CALP) develop with a child's immersion in a language and combine to allow students to understand language conversationally, communicate fluently, utilize their language abilities to carry out learning tasks, and leverage their language abilities to acquire new language. Given these guidelines, limited standardized measures exist for the assessment of many linguistically diverse groups in Canada. It is our role to adopt assessment practices that challenge the power dynamic in our society that treat the psychoeducational assessment of the culturally and linguistically diverse clients with the individualized care they deserve. In this poster current challenges in the assessment of linguistically diverse students in Canada will be addressed. In addition, it will touch upon preliminary findings from a survey Canadian psychology practitioners regarding common practices in the psychoeducational assessment of linguistically diverse Canadian students. The presenters hope to spur discussion among fellow practitioners regarding how we might best support the linguistically diverse individuals referred to us.

INDIGENOUS YOUTH ACCESS OF SUPPORT FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS: A CASE STUDY

09

Melanie Nelson with Laurie Ford and Squamish Nation

University of British Columbia

There have been calls for improved mental health services for Indigenous communities (Truth and Reconciliation Canada, 2015) and students (British Columbia Teacher's Federation, 2015). Given most Indigenous youth attend public school (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2021), support for mental health and wellness should be targeted there (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). The purpose of this study was to explore what Indigenous youth do to support their mental health and wellness in schools and community using an embedded single case study approach guided by an Indigenous Storywork framework. Two Cultural Support Persons, four community members, and six youth completed semi-structured interviews. The results are organized into ten themes. Three themes are identified with respect

to Research Question 1 (How does traditional Squamish Nation understanding of wellness influence what students do to support their wellness in schools and community?) including the Importance of Connection, Maintaining Balance, and Signs of Unwellness. Four themes are discussed in the context of Research Question 2 (What do Squamish youth do to support their mental health and wellness in their schools and community?) including Wellness Through the Four Realms, People Youth Look to for Support, Significance of Culture and Language, and Western Mental Health is Valued. The other three themes are discussed with respect to Research Question 3 (What factors influence what Squamish youth do to support their mental health and wellness?), which included School is Valued but Difficult, Ongoing Lateral Violence, and Dependency and Unwellness.

RE-IMAGINING SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY ADVOCACY IN BC: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

10

Simon Lasaingo with Dana Dmytro

University of British Columbia

This session will delve into the past, present, and future of school psychology advocacy in British Columbia. In 1989, Thomas Fagan highlighted the challenges of "autonomy, role definition, and credential recognition" faced by the field, and since then, much has evolved, yet much remains unchanged. We will present historical advocacy initiatives in Canadian and BC school psychology, drawing from academic and grey literature, as well as insights from interviews with key stakeholders. To gain a comprehensive view of current advocacy in Canada, we will provide a visual summary of advocacy statements and issues as outlined by school psychology associations across Canada, as well as advocacy mandates and initiatives National Association of School Psychology, offering a broader context.

Our session will also spotlight recent advocacy efforts in BC, demonstrating the profession's ongoing commitment to growth and improvement. In the "Where to next?" section, we invite participants to actively contribute their perspectives on emerging issues and the evolving values of school psychologists. Topics for discussion include promoting the distinct value of the profession, addressing service waitlists, exploring expanded roles and scopes of practice, training and recruitment concerns, interprovincial mobility, the pivotal role in school mental health, equity, diversity, inclusion, and truth and reconciliation initiatives. This input will help shape the future of school psychology advocacy in BC, fostering a more inclusive, responsive, and impactful profession.

Simon Lasaingo with Dana Dmytro

University of British Columbia

This session offers an exploration of the past, present, and future roles and functions of school psychologists. A historical overview will be presented that summarizes key milestones in the evolving role of school psychologists in Canada from the 1920s to the present. Next, a snapshot of the current state of school psychology based on local Ministry descriptions, insights from national surveys, and international perspectives from the National Association of School Psychologists. Two Canadian surveys (Jordan et al., 2009; Ritchie et al., 2021) will be highlighted that summarize school psychologists' services, roles, and functions, including time allocation for assessment, report-writing, feedback communication, and engagement in intervention and prevention services. A key message from these surveys is the pressing need for more precise data and enhanced communication within the profession. Furthermore, members will be invited to share their ideas, identify potential barriers, and envision the future. Potential roles for school psychologists include prevention specialists, child advocates, direct service providers, trainers, healthcare contributors, interventionists, and facilitators of organizational change (Bernett et al., 2023; Farmer et al., 2021; Nastasi et al., 1998). Guidance from the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) and NASP documents will be summarized to provide insights into the path ahead for school psychologists in BC.

Hira Peracha with G. Thomas Schanding, Jr.

University of British Columbia

School psychologists are trained to provide comprehensive school-based psychological services that can include assessment, intervention, consultation, and research. The Canadian Psychological Association recommends a school psychologist to student ratio of 1:500 to 1:1000; however, little is known regarding the actual and desired ratio of school psychologists for school districts across Canada. The current project collected data from district principals/directors of instruction in public school districts in British Columbia regarding the number of school psychologists employed during the 2022-2023 school year as well as the professional activities of those school psychologists. Based on responses from 21 districts (35% response rate), the reported ratio of school psychologists to students was approximately 1:3085, with a desired ratio of 1:2313. Based on the responses, school psychologists are reported to currently spend 66% of time in Assessment activities and 17% of time in Consultation/Case Conferences. Very few respondents indicated that school psychologists provided services related to academic, social/emotional, or crisis intervention. Respondents reported a desire for more intervention services. These data may be useful in helping to advocate for more school psychologists as well as a broadened scope of professional practice activities within the province.

Anisa Nasser with Dorna Rahimi, Laurie Ford
University of British Columbia

Psychoeducational assessments play a vital role in understanding students' functioning and determining their eligibility for services. The feedback meeting, where the results of the assessment are shared with families and teachers, can be an emotional and complex experience, particularly for the family. Effectively conducting feedback meetings are essential for providing accurate information about the child's needs, motivating families to seek support, and for empowering teachers to support the child in functional ways. Parent and teacher experiences in the feedback meeting determine understanding of and adherence to the psychologists' recommendations, and thus impact the child's access to support. Based on both research and practice, we have developed an approach to use in feedback sessions we call the Responsive Assessment Highlights & Summary Sheets, a flexible tool for facilitating effective and efficient feedback meetings. At the core of successful feedback meetings is the presentation of assessment results in a clear and understandable way. To do this, our tool emphasizes the elimination of jargon and technical language, while presenting information in a clear manner that is tailored to the parents' context. Coupled with this tool we will further present considerations on what makes a successful feedback conference. By incorporating Responsive Assessment Highlights & Summary Sheets into psychoeducational assessments, we aim to improve the overall quality of feedback conferences, facilitating better understanding, engagement, relationship building and decision-making for both families and teachers.

Juliane Dmyterko with Antonia Soldovi, Laurie Ford
University of British Columbia

In this poster presentation, preliminary findings of a study that centered the first-hand experiences of autistic adults to formulate a theory of neurodiversity affirming practice is shared. The preliminary results from this study will be disseminated among conference attendees enriching their understanding of the neurodiversity paradigm. Furthermore, practical strategies aimed at fostering shifts in the professional practices of conference participants will be shared, thus fostering an environment that is more affirming for neurodivergent students and their families. This is important as it directly contributes to enhancing the mental health and overall well-being of neurodivergent students and families that school psychologists work with daily.

Thirty autistic adults participated in the project, and data collection involved surveys, semi-structured interviews, and participant e-journals. Memoing was utilized alongside rigorous coding techniques. Methodological rigour was maintained through member-checking, triangulation, and peer debriefing. The research iteratively intertwined data collection and analysis, culminating in theoretical saturation.

Key findings underscore the centrality of the neurodiversity paradigm. Autistic adults identified core determinants of neurodiversity-affirming practice: practitioner approach, service environment, and intentional activities such as professional development. These factors collectively shape neurodivergent individuals' perception of service-affirming neurodiversity. This research enhances our understanding of how school psychologists can foster neurodiversity-affirming practices promoting inclusive and educational environments that celebrate neurodiversity. Insights from autistic adults' lived experiences provide a robust foundation for improving professional services and fostering neurodiversity acceptance in education.

LONG WAITLISTS AND THEIR POSSIBLE LEGAL IMPLICATIONS: NEED TO KNOW

15

Antonia Soldovieri with Simon Lisaingo, Laurie Ford

University of British Columbia

Canadian school districts have a responsibility to provide students with special needs access to educational supports (BC Ministry of Education, 2016). Landmark cases such as *Moore v. Education* (2012) have highlighted how a failure to provide timely assessments and contingency of care can cause irreparable harm for students, and the importance of identification and monitoring of student needs over time. Despite clear policy stating the right to access meaningful education, the onus of responsibility for responding to concerning trends in assessment wait-times is not clear within the current legal framework and educational policy in British Columbia. As a result, the law fails to protect students and perpetuates disadvantage on the basis of families' ability to pursue assessments privately (Carter, 2015).

Unlike policy in the United States, where the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 USC § 1400 (2004) [IDEA]) stipulates that schools have the responsibility to identify students and complete an assessment within clearly defined time constraints, Canadian schools are not held to these standards. Given a lack of guidelines and legislation, students are at risk of not being identified, sitting on the waitlist for extended periods of time, and experiencing compounding disadvantage due to lack of access to meaningful learning (Canadian Psychological Association, 2022). The proposed work seeks to explore possible legal implications of long waitlists for assessment, parse areas of responsibility, and outline the possible roles of school psychologists in making changes to the assessment process from identification all the way to the implementation of supports.

Melanie Baerg*University of Northern British Columbia*

The ability to read and write is critical to positive life-outcomes in our print-driven world, but in BC schools, literacy practices are often not aligned with what decades of scientific evidence tells us about how the human brain learns to read and write. This is a systemic problem and it has a detrimental impact on students, society, and the economy.

This petition was started by a group of concerned BC educators, including school psychologists. Even if you aren't directly involved in our education system, this is an issue every BC resident should be aware of. At the petition link, <https://chnng.it/tgRxQWWMzg>, individuals can learn about why this issue isn't an educational bandwagon or ideological pendulum swing. It's about implementing science-informed, trauma-informed, culturally-responsive, effective instruction that's beneficial for all, essential for many and harmful to none.

**SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS WORKING TOWARDS RECONCILIATION:
RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPMENT WITH LOCAL FIRST NATIONS**

17

Dana Dmytro with Katherine Marshall, Sandra Gregory, Daniela Murphy, Shauna Loewen-Schmidt, Rachel Godfrey, Sarina Moore, Melanie Nelson*Langley School District/UBC*

In 2018, the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) and the Psychology Foundation of Canada (PFC) released a joint response to the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report in Canada. The task force outlined how the profession has violated its own ethics with respect to practice with Indigenous peoples and how to move forward through a reconciliatory process as individuals and as a profession. It is unclear how school psychologists have been working towards reconciliation in their practice, and many school psychologists may be searching for more specific examples of how to begin or extend the process of addressing reconciliation. This poster session will focus on the reconciliation work of one group of school psychologists in a public school district in an urban setting in British Columbia. This team has been engaging in relationship development with local First Nations on whose territory the district resides. The poster will outline the context of the group, the initial steps taken in their reconciliation work, and facilitators and considerations that impacted the group's progress. Examples of specific relationship-building initiatives and the outcomes of that work will also be outlined.



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