

Providing Students with a Voice

A measure of students' socio-emotional well-being to optimize learning for all students

Dr. Paolina Seitz, Assistant Professor of Education at St. Mary's University is part of a research team in partnership with Calgary Catholic School District (CCSD) exploring how socio-emotional variables can be leveraged to optimize learning for all students. With colleagues Dr. Chu from the University of Calgary and Dr. O. Bulut from the University of Alberta, and awarded a grant from Alberta Education, Dr. Seitz will be developing a survey designed to measure students' levels of non-cognitive variables and investigating how these variables optimize student learning.

Learning is primarily an emotional process but it is often discussed solely from a cognitive perspective (Damasio, 2001, 2007). Student learning is often represented using student achievement grades, but a simple rubric or percentage score seldom captures the multidimensional complexities of learning. Some researchers have argued that part of the complexity of measuring student learning can be attributed to the multiple variables at play – environmental (social), cognitive, and emotional (affective; Leighton, Chu, & Seitz, 2013; Willms, 1999). To better understand the complexities that undergird student learning, it is important to use student self-reported measures.

The study will design and test the survey for its reliability and validity; assess how non-cognitive variable differ among students in different schools, or different parts of the city; which non-cognitive variables best predict optimum learning for all students; and if current school programs like mental health wellness programs improve students' ratings of related non-cognitive variables such as emotional well-being.

The project will span two academic years and is divided into two stages. The pilot stage will develop the survey and administer it to approximately 1000 students from Grades 4-12 from the partner district. In the second school year, the survey will be administered to all the Grade 4-12 students (approximately 39,000) enrolled in the partner district.



Dr. Paolina Seitz (left) receiving the Lawless Award in recognition of major scholarly achievements at the 2019 StMU Convocation Ceremony

Significance of Study

This study provides students with a voice to indicate their non-cognitive needs and can inform school programs to enhance students' learning experiences and improve their preparedness to be functioning members of society. Calgary Catholic School District will benefit from this research by having a tool to measure how variables impact learning. The survey will be published as an open-access source so that other educators and school districts can tailor a survey to measure their district priorities.

"Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.

Emotional literacy implies an expanded responsibility for schools in helping socialize children. This daunting task requires two major challenges: that teachers go beyond their traditional mission, and that people in the community become more involved with schools as both active participants in children's learning and as individual mentors".

— Daniel Goleman, 1995

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Managing Editor: Thérèse Takacs, Vice-President, Advancement Tel: 403.254.3139 therese.takacs@stmu.ca



The Magic of Storytelling

Weaving Words of Wisdom Project demonstrates power of communications

What started as a collaborative project between St. Mary's University students and campus neighbours from United Active Living (UAL) has grown into a foundationally impactful relationship that has produced a truly one-of-a-kind keepsake.

Funded through the Canadian Federal Government's New Horizons Seniors Grant, *Weaving Words of Wisdom: Intergenerational Life Writing* was a collaborative life writing project, formed a creative inter-generational community through which the life stories and experience of older adults were brought to life. Creative writing, psychology, and Liberal Studies students acted as collaborative assistants to provide deep listening, creative midwifery, and assistance with the production of written, performed, and multi-media life stories that share the legacy of the older adults' lives and what they most wanted others to know about the life that they had lived.

Mentoring the creative life writing community and providing the

technical expertise the older adults needed to guide their story telling process was Dr. Jocelyn Williams, Associate Professor of English at St. Mary's who has experience working with student writers.



Dr. Jocelyn Williams

For Dr. Williams, the Weaving Words of Wisdom (WOWW) project demonstrates the true power of communication.

"The relationships, social understanding, and cultural renewal that grew out of this project are testaments to the hope and possibility we sometimes find difficult to recognize in society," said Dr. Williams. "The pairs of younger and older adults, in their generous and voluntary friendships prove, that empathetic communication preserves histories, engages the present, and secures a future of hospitality and exchange."

All of the participants gathered on the St. Mary's University campus in February in celebration and recognition of the year-long project where audience members were treated to excerpts



Photo credits: Daniel Melvill Jones

Clockwise from left: Members of the United Active Living community and students from St. Mary's University participate in the Weaving Words with Wisdom project.

from the forthcoming publication and granted insight into the true depth of the relationships created between the students and United Active Living residents.

"These new pairs of friends have exchanged stories during dog walks, edited their memoirs over tea, posed for portraits in the sunlight, and will continue to enrich each other's lives long after the book launch and exhibit," said Dr. Williams. "I'm buoyed by the love and respect between the intergenerational friends; they make me confident about meaningful exchange and the healing power of communication."

To Dr. Williams, the Mauro Gallery was a perfect location to display the intergenerational artwork that grew out of the book project. With the gallery's rich history and its preservation, it mirrored the every efforts and intentions of Weaving Words of Wisdom.

"The portraits and paintings hung in the Mauro Gallery are extensions of the storytelling between the students and older adults," explained Dr. Williams. "Like the gallery, itself, the artwork is a reflection of stories that effect change and everlasting relationships. Both the WOWW exhibit and the restoration of the water tower into the Mauro Gallery are made possible by the generosity and care of big hearted people in our community."



Weaving Words of Wisdom is now available for purchase at the St. Mary's University Bookstore.

Thoughts on Mentoring Students

A modest contribution to an on-going conversation

Howard L. Hopkins, PhD

This brief offering focuses on two significant perspectives on the mentoring process: first, the inapplicability of a “one-size-fits-all” approach to either the mentoring practitioners, i.e., instructors, or the mentoring recipients, i.e., students, and, secondly, the “progressive dialectical conversation” between instructor and student.

While the universal concern for the individual student’s present and future well-being – intellectually, ethically, and spiritually – governs all “mentoring” decisions and actions for every St. Mary’s student, there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach applicable to either the instructors or the students.

The oversimplification inherent in the one-size-fits-all approach to mentoring may seem, at least, to enjoy success with the overwhelming majority of students who appear to be in no need of any “extraordinary guidance” beyond what the instructor provides in the normal schedule of course delivery. However, a small segment of the student population does not fit into this ideal model, and, indeed, may breach the parameters of that model. The representatives of this group alert the instructor to their difficulties either by making a clear statement of the problem to the instructor, or by exhibiting behavior and/or academic performance which indicates a problem, and thereby necessitate that the instructor take a special initiative to discover just what is amiss in such exceptional cases; both of these scenarios however, may require “extraordinary guidance,” from the instructor.

The one-size-fits-all approach acquires its major impetus from the largely uniform faculty disposition toward all of our students. This, in turn, demands that each student be recognized, appreciated, and respected as a unique individual, whose individuality is informed by that person’s life-context (religious or non-religious beliefs, ethnicity, socio-economic situation, personal relationships, and so on), which, in turn, encompasses the individual’s defining beliefs and values, as a human being. But this abstract principle needs time in order to be effectively applied, and, also, requires, especially concerning students needing extraordinary guidance, time for the instructor to gain a reasonable and sensitive understanding both of the student as a unique individual, and of what kind of customized approach would work best based on the student’s uniquely challenging circumstances.

I am in no way suggesting that the instructor usurp the role of a psychological counsellor or spiritual advisor, but with students who need “extraordinary guidance,” sometimes the instructor is the first person aware of a problem, and it is the instructor’s decision to either direct the student to either one or both of the above professionals, or rather to expand the academic mentoring process.

This depth-understanding leads to the second aspect of the mentoring process, noted above, which is the “progressive dialectical conversation” between instructor and student. In this context, “dialectical” means, most importantly an exchange of ideas between two or more interlocutors, and “progressive,” the student’s steady emergence from being a passive presence to becoming a distinct but equal participant (self-mentor) - a knowledgeable, autonomous, and responsible decision-maker and agent – the ultimate achievement of the mentoring process.

St. Mary’s University Student Highlights

Biology Student in Belize

Based on skills gained in the experiential learning portion of Tropical Biology, **Danika Schramm** has landed work in Belize at the TREES bird banding station. The first time down there Danika was an intern, helping out with both bird and bat banding. She did such a good job, the Director of Research asked her to come back for the Fall to help run the banding station and programs.

Biology Student in Czech Republic

Kiara O’Shea spent one month this summer in the Czech Republic at Charles University in Prague. The Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport offers full scholarships to only two Alberta post-secondary students to take Slavonic Studies in the Czech Republic during the summer. Students study Czech, language, literature, culture, history. Kiara also visited important landmarks and attended cultural events.

History Student in Alberta-Smithsonian Internship Program

Emily Grant spent the summer working with Smithsonian scholars, scientists, researchers, and educators in Washington, D.C. The Alberta Smithsonian Internship Program (ASIP) invites ten Albertans each year to participate in an internship with the esteemed Smithsonian Institution, the world’s largest consortium of museums located in Washington, D.C. The complex comprises several specialized museums and research centers that engage in the pursuit of information and knowledge in a variety of disciplines ranging from the arts, culture, and history to the sciences. Emily assisted with research, helped produce world-class programs and exhibits, while learning from experts in the fields about how make an impact and develop personally and professionally.



Dr. Lourdes Arciniega

The Magic of Storytelling

Using immersive theatre skills as teaching tools

With the support of St. Mary's University Teaching Innovation Grant, Dr. Lourdes Arciniega will study how applying immersive theatre skills to classroom pedagogy can result in a more creative, communal, and collaborative experience for students. Immersive Theatre is an audience-participation practice, at the forefront of contemporary, emerging theatre movements, that focuses on building a more engaged audience and nurturing curiosity.

When students learn new ways to apprehend the material, they are excited about coming to class, and show up with a curious mindset, anticipating that something exciting and unusual will happen in that space. With this innovation, professors and students engage in a retroactive relationship where they have the chance to experiment and view the texts from the point of view of authors, audience, and creators. This multi-perspective relationship forces students to question their own standpoint, their biases towards the text, and allows for the possibility of revisioning the material. Students transform from being passive receivers of information into active, and engaged learners, with the confidence to produce material that is not only critical and challenging of the texts, but also original in its own right.

While Immersive Theatre practices are steadily making their way into Drama curriculums, Dr.

Arciniega strongly believe that some of its approaches can also be assets for instructors of English and Classics due to these courses' focus on oral storytelling and theatre narratives. Since these courses often involve manuscripts and plays written originally in Old English, Middle English, and Greek, students often struggle to relate not only to the language, but also to the form and the themes. Students may feel displaced and dislocated from unfamiliar narratives which are so far removed from their personal experience. By bringing immersive theatre practices into the classroom, such as revising how we view timelines, focusing on site-specificity, and foregrounding the role of the spectators, students can learn how to approach the texts in a more collaborative, active, and productive manner.

Immersive Theatre practices can easily adapt to other disciplines with multiple stakeholders at play, such as St. Mary's inaugural Social Justice Program, some Psychology courses, and certainly some of the History and Political Science courses, in addition to the interdisciplinary approach in the Liberal Studies program. Dr. Arciniega will spend the next year researching and implementing some of these theories into teaching practices with the aim of developing an innovative pedagogical model that can serve and be referenced by multiple disciplines in the St. Mary's academic community.

Recent Faculty Activity

Baltutis, Peter. "A Prophetic Voice in the Canadian Catholic Church: Romeo Maione's Model of Lay Leadership for Justice in the World." American Catholic Historical Association (ACHA) Annual Conference, American Historical Association (AHA) (Chicago: January 3-6, 2019).

Bechtel, Trevor, Matthew Eaton, and Timothy Harvie (eds) *Encountering Earth: Thinking Theologically With a More-Than-Human World* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018) [published May 16, 2018]

Bresky, Luke. "The Domestic Manners of Henry David Thoreau" (Alternative/Mainstream: A U.S. Studies Conference, St. Mary's U, October 12-14, 2018)

Bresky, Luke. "Revisiting Universal Emancipation: Reformist Etiquette" (American Political Fictions Symposium, U of Tennessee, Knoxville, Sept. 20-21, 2018)

Bresky, Luke. "Antebellum Post-Civility: Angry Quietists and Polite Radicals" (scheduled for presentation at Canadian Association for American Studies Symposium, Concordia U, October 25-27, 2019)

Broomfield, Catherine; Calihoo, Keith; Hyland-Russell, Tara; Scott, Michelle; and Sarah Twomey. "Grief, Loss, and Conciliation: Are we Ready Yet for (Re)Conciliation? Seeking Healing Medicine through the Arts for Traumatized Indigenous Youth and Learners." Position Paper Submitted as part of SSHRC Connection Grant and Development of Indigenous Research, February 2019.

Burns, A., Hill, S. L., Danyluk, P., & Crawford, K. (2018). What's in it for me? Partner teachers and their role in pre-service teacher education. *Journal of Educational Thought*, 51(1), 35-56.

Chu, M-W & Seitz, P. (2018). The Landscape of Standardized Tests in Canada – The Need for Change. Paper presented at the International Test Commission, July 2018 Conference in Montreal, QC, Canada.

Davis, Trent. (2019). Book Review of *Teacher Education and the Pursuit of Wisdom: A Practical Guide for Education Philosophy Courses* (Sean Steel) *Philosophical Inquiry in Education* (The Journal of the Canadian Philosophy of Education Society) Vol. 26, No.1

Davis, Trent. (2018). *Enhancing Tolerance in a Populist Age.* Alternative/Mainstream: A U.S. Studies Conference. St. Mary's University, Calgary. Proposal for the Conference was peer-reviewed.

Garrison, Jennifer. "Mankind and the Masculine Pleasures of Penance," *Exemplaria* 31 (2019): 46-62.

Garrison, Jennifer. "Filthy Men: The Boundaries of Masculinity in the Somme le Roi Tradition." 54th International Medieval Congress, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI, May 2018.

Garrison, Jennifer. "Conscience's Banquet: Labour Politics, Public Humanities, and the Modern University." International Piers Plowman Society Conference, University of Miami, April 2019.

Garrison, Jennifer. "Mankind and the Gender

Transformations of Medieval Confession." 20th Biennial New Chaucer Society Congress, University of Toronto, July 2018.

Grothman, Gary and Isaak, D.j. Apodibius confusus in Fish Creek Provincial Park, Alberta, Canada, 14th International Symposium on Tardigrada, August 2018.

Henderson, Linda. "The Athlicians: Presenting Marching Band as High Performance Sport." North American Society for the Sociology of Sport Annual Meeting, Vancouver British Columbia, November 2018.

Henderson, Linda. "Recipe for Success: A Technique to Enhance Student Performance on Essay Questions." Pacific Sociological Association Annual Meeting, Oakland California, March 2019.

Lein, M.R., and S. F. Lovell. 2018. Canada Invaded! Long-term dialect changes in White-crowned Sparrows. International Ornithological Congress, Vancouver, Canada, August

Lock, J. V., Johnson, C., Altowairiki, N., Burns, A., Hill, L., & Ostrowski, C. P. (2019). Enhancing Instructor Capacity Through the Redesign of Online Practicum Course Environments Using Universal Design for Learning. In J. Keengwe (Ed.), *Handbook of Research on Blended Learning Pedagogies and Professional Development in Higher Education* (pp. 1-20). Hershey, PA: IGI Global. doi:10.4018/978-1-5225-5557-5.ch001

Harvie, Timothy. "Eschatological Communion: Human and Non-Human Animals In Light of Evolution" *Toronto Journal of Theology* 34.1 (Spring 2018)

Harvie, Timothy. "Animals as Eschatology: Struggle, Communion, and the Relational Task of Theology," Trevor Bechtel, Matthew Eaton, and Timothy Harvie (eds) *Encountering Earth: Thinking Theologically With a More-Than-Human World* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018) [published May 16, 2018]

Hirst, S. P., Jeffs, C., Arcellana-Panlilo, M., Charles, A., Hill, S. L., & Hillman, B. (2019). Something to Say: Writing for Publication. *Papers on Postsecondary Learning and Teaching*, 3, 9-16.

Hill, S. L. & Seitz, P. Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action: Culturally responsive pedagogy and Language Revitalization. Presentation at the 2018 Symposium on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, SoTL Conference, November 8-10, 2018, Banff, AB.

Hill, S. L., Danyluk, P., Crawford, K., & Burns, A. Critical Conversations in Field Experiences: Reflexive Inquiry. Presentation at the 2018 Symposium on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, SoTL Conference, November 8-10, 2018, Banff, AB.

Prioletta, J., & Hill, S. L. CASWE in retrospect II. Presentation at the Canadian Association for the Study of Women in Education (CASWE) Conference, University of Regina, May 27-29, 2018, Regina, SK.

Hill, S. L., Seitz, P., & McDougall, V. Embracing Educational Diversity: Collaboration with Tsut'ina Education and St. Mary's University. Presentation at the Canadian Society of the Study of Education (CSSE) conference, University of Regina, May 27-30, 2018, Regina, SK.

Hirst, S., Jeffs, C., Paris, B., Arcellana-Pamillio, M., Hill, S. L., Charles, A., & Hilman, B. Something to say: Writing for publication. Presentation at the University of Calgary Conference on Postsecondary Learning and Teaching, University of Calgary, May 1-2, 2018, Calgary, AB.

Knowles, Norman. "As Christ the Carpenter: Work Camp Missions and the Construction of Christian Manhood in late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Canada" in Peter Gossage and Robert Rutherford, eds. *Making Men, Making History: Canadian Masculinities across Time and Place*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2018.

Knowles, Norman. "Sock-it-to-em': The Life and Ministry of the Rev. Canon R.H.S. Greene," *Prayer Book Society of Canada Newsletter*, March 2018, 2-6.

Knowles, Norman. "Our Native Church: The Indigenous Agents of the Church Missionary Society in Canada and New Zealand-A Comparative Analysis," James Cook University, Cairns, Australia, 19 May 2018.

Macleod, Michael. "Corporate Social Responsibility in North America: The Politics of Business Power in Canada vs the United States," paper presented at the Canadian Political Science Association annual conference, University of Regina, Regina, May 2018.

Macleod, Michael. "The Political Economy of Corporate Social Responsibility: Business Power & Accountability in Canada and the United States," paper presented at the Prairie Political Science Association annual conference, Banff Alberta, September 2018.

Macleod, Michael. "Politics in the Age of Trump" presented at the Canadian Association for American Studies annual conference, St Mary's University, Calgary, October 2018.

McArthur, A., & Syrnyk, C. (2018). Improving the Post-secondary Student Experience: The Effectiveness of Animal Assisted Therapy Events, *Journal of Society & Animals*, 26, 1-17.

O'Briain, Katarina. "Phillis Wheatley and the Limits of Craft Labor." *American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Denver (March 2019). Presented for panel entitled "Between Art and Labor: Craft in the Global Eighteenth Century."

O'Briain, Katarina. "Phillis Wheatley and the Limits of Georgic." *American Comparative Literature Association*, Washington DC (March 2019). Presented for panel entitled "Literary History of Capitalism."

Porter, R.D., & Fabrigar, L.R. (2018). Revisiting a traditional indirect measure of attitudes: The Error-Choice Technique. Presented at the Ohio State University Symposium on Social Psychology, Columbus, OH.

Raithby, A., Velasco, F., Timonera, J., Sosiak, C., McLean, M.A. 2018. Does myrmecochory facilitate the seed transfer and germination of *Thesium ramosum*?

Presentation at the 65th Annual Meeting of the Entomological Society of Alberta, Sept 28, 2018.

Rowland, A. & Porter, R.D. (2019). The False Consensus Effect and Attitudes towards Marijuana: A Test of the Similarity Contingency Model. Presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Portland, OR.

Salomons, Carolyn. "Such designs as were righteous in themselves and resolutely conducted': Isabel, history, and mythmaking", in *Mito e historia en la televisión y el cine español*, ed. Christine Blackshaw, Valencia: Editorial Albatros, 2019.

Seitz, P. & Hill, S. L. (2018). Embracing Educational Diversity: Collaboration with Tsut'ina Education and St. Mary's University. Paper presented at the 2018 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, Regina, Saskatchewan.

Seitz, P. & Hill, S.L. (2018). Collaboration Between Tsut'ina Education and St. Mary's University: Building a Learning Community in Student Assessment. Paper presented at the 2018 Symposium on Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Banff, Alberta.

Syrnyk, C. (2018). Knowing nurture: Experiences of teaching assistants for children with SEMH. *British Journal of Special Education*, 45(3), 329-348.

Timonera, J., *Velasco, F., *Raithby, A., Sosiak, C., McLean, M.A. 2018. Ant interactions with *Thesium ramosum* seeds. Presentation at the Undergraduate Research in Science Conference of Alberta, April 29, 2019.

Twomey, Sarah. *Living Teacher Education in Hawai'i: Critical Perspectives*. University of Hawai'i Press, 2019.

Turcotte, Gerry. *Big Things: Ordinary Thoughts in Extraordinary Times*, Novalis: Toronto, 2019.

Turcotte, Gerry. "The Caribbean Gothic Down Under: Caribbean Influences in Marianne de Pierres' Parrish Plessis Novels," *Echinox*, Vol. 35 (2018): Neo Gothic Hybridizations of the Imaginary: 237-43.

Velasco, F., *Raithby, A., *Timonera, J., Sosiak, C., McLean, M.A. 2018. *Thesium ramosum* seed dispersal by Formica species. Presentation at the Undergraduate Research in Science Conference of Alberta, April 29, 2019.

Williams, Jocelyn and Hyland-Russell, Tara. Editor. *Weaving Words of Wisdom*, Calgary: St. Mary's University Press, 2019.

Williams, Jocelyn. "Poetry as Preventative Medicine for Teen Mental Health" AISC, Alberta Teachers' Convention, Calgary.

Williams, Jocelyn. "Nanabush Showed Me: Teaching Learning Indigenous Literature" AEPL Conference, Colorado.

Zardecki, N., McLean, M.A. 2019. The Relationship between the Hemiparasite *Thesium ramosum* and Mycorrhizal Presence on Host Plant Roots in Fish Creek Provincial Park. Presentation at the Undergraduate Research in Science Conference of Alberta, April 29, 2019.

StMU Research Grant Funded Projects

Dr. Gary Grothman

Project Title: Online Database of Public-Domain Publications
Relating to Tardigrades

Dr. Scott Lovell

Project Title: Vocal, Morphological, Molecular, and Ecological
Interactions Between White-Crowned Sparrow Subspecies in
Secondary Contact

Dr. Mary Ann McLean

Project Title: Evaluating possible vectors for the spread of invasive
plant *Thesium ramosum*

Dr. Mary Ann McLean

Project Title: Digitizing the StMU Herbarium Collection

Dr. Gayle Thrift

Project Title: Canada's Cold War Initiative: Peacekeeping, A Moral
Imperative in an Immoral World

Dr. Cory Wright-Maley

Project Title: Teacher Training and Learning Related to Simulations



Melanie Carina Schmoll, PhD
(University of Hamburg, Germany)
Political Scientist, Educator and Historian

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2



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By Sarah Twomey

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By Cory Wright-Maley



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17