A Message from the Editorial Team

This year, the focus of *RiaN* is on bridging the often-isolating gap between education researchers and practitioners. *RiaN*'s new direction focuses on our own Faculty of Education with the hope that you will be inspired to engage with the research as well as the researchers. In this issue of *RiaN*, we spotlight the research of our graduate students: Andrew Coombs, Nadia S. Arghash, Newsha Ziaian-Ghafari, and Heather Braund.

Sincerely, Clarissa de Leon, Stephen MacGregor, and Chris Suppa (RiaN@queensu.ca)

What shapes teachers' approaches to assessment?
Andrew Coombs, PhD Student

What events and experiences do graduate students describe as impacting their thriving and well-being?
Nadia S. Arghash, MEd

Why is this important?

- Teachers' approaches to assessment are comprised of both conceptual understandings and practical knowledge related to assessment, situated within the context of their classroom teaching.
- Teachers' approaches to assessment directly influence the classroom learning culture.

What does this research uncover?

- Canadian teachers within four career stages (i.e. beginning of teacher education, end of teacher education, within first five years of teaching, and with more than five years of teaching experience) prioritized similar approaches to assessment.
- However, experiences during teacher education programs and their early career contributed to significant differences between career stages.

Why does this matter?

- Early career teachers need to be provided with learning opportunities during their teacher education and the embedded mentoring during the first five years of their career to help them navigate the freedom and pressures of classroom teaching and assessment.

Why is this important?

- Graduate students are vulnerable to anxiety and depression while facing unique challenges.
- Lack of sufficient research on graduate students' well-being prevents us from understanding the unique contextual factors impacting their experiences.

What does this research uncover?

- We used a positive lens to examine individuals' well-being instead of traditional measures of psychological mental health. We uncovered the supports and barriers that graduate students encounter in their well-being.
- Supports: Self-care, positive relationships, and supportive departmental cultures.
- Barriers: The struggle to balance life/school, isolation, and bureaucratic obstacles.
- These factors are interconnected and exist across all facets of graduate students' lives.

Why does this matter?

- Findings from our study helps us gain a holistic understanding of the factors important to graduate experiences and which supports need to be in place for students to thrive.

Coombs, A., DeLuca, C., LaPointe-McEwan, D., & Chalas, A. (2018). Changing approaches to classroom assessment: An empirical study across teacher career stages. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *71*, 134-144.

Soleas, E. K., Moucessian, A. M., Nesbitt–Coe, H., Arghash, N. S., Geladi, A., and Freeman J. G. (2018, April 17). *Self–determination and thriving in graduate programs: A supports and obstacles analysis*. Paper presented at the annual meeting for the American Educational Research Association, New York, NY.

What do elementary teachers working with exceptional learners need to thrive?
Newsha Ziaian-Ghafari, PhD Student

Why is this important?
- Working with exceptional learners is sometimes challenging and can involve a substantial emotional investment on the part of the teacher.
- It is important to understand what affects teacher well-being to better support teachers that work with exceptional learners.

What does this research uncover?
- For teachers to experience thriving, they must feel: that they have opportunities to make choices in their work with students; competent and successful in meeting the needs of their students; and connected with important others like administration, colleagues, and especially students.
- These themes play distinct yet interrelated roles in supporting teacher well-being.

Why does this matter?
- Experiences of autonomy, competence, and most importantly relatedness can have a vital role in maintaining the resilience of teachers and fostering their well-being.
- This, in turn, might lead to lower attrition rates and increased workplace satisfaction.

Ziaian-Ghafari, N. (2018, April). *Autonomy, competence, and relatedness in teachers working with students with special needs.* Paper presented at the annual meeting for the American Educational Research Association, New York, NY.

How can teachers' classroom assessment practices promote the development of metacognition?
Heather Braund, PhD Student

Why is this important?
- Metacognitive thinking leads to increased academic success and can improve student learning.
- Students with strong metacognitive abilities are successful because they understand their learning and can effectively apply strategies to direct their learning.
- Formative assessment strategies have the potential to develop students' metacognition and engage students as active participants.

What does this research uncover?
- Teachers value and use assessment as learning practices (i.e., peer assessment and reflective thinking) as a means to develop students' metacognition.
- Teachers expressed the need for students to receive ongoing feedback about their metacognitive thinking and strategy use.

Why does this matter?
- Elementary teachers are promoting students' metacognition but require additional support to engage students in their learning through formative assessment.

Braund, H., & DeLuca, C. (2018). Elementary students as active agents in their learning: An empirical study of the connections between assessment practices and student metacognition. *Australian Educational Researcher: Special Issue on Student Agency in Classroom Assessment.*
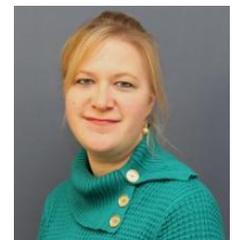
Contributing Researchers

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