



Educational Psychology Graduate Student

Research Colloquium

Friday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008

6-138 Education North

1:00pm to 4:00pm



## AGENDA

- 1:00        **Introduction**
- 1:05        **Keynote Speaker** – Dr. Markku Jahnukainen
- 1:25        James Sanders & Olivia Lestideau
- 1:35        Shane Lynch, Judy Cameron, & David Pierce
- 1:45        Sara Plume
- 1:55        Lindsey Leenaars & Christina Rinaldi
- 2:05        Jenelle Job
- 2:15        Deborah MacNiel & Robin Everall
- 2:25        Holly Stack-Cutler
- 2:35        **Break** – 10 minutes
- 2:45        Oksana Babenko, Jacqueline Leighton, Carol Okamoto, & Ken Cor
- 2:55        Kristine Hagen & Sophie Yohani
- 3:05        Wanwisa Hannok
- 3:15        Marion Stewart & Derek Truscott
- 3:25        Andrea Krol
- 3:35        Anoosha Aghakhani
- 3:45        Jennifer Barber, Tim Loreman, Judy Lupart, & Donna McGhie-  
Richmond
- 3:55        Olivia Lestideau, Marty Mrazik, & Carmen Rasmussen
- 4:05        Augustine Metadio Gundula
- 4:15        **Presentation of Research Award and  
Closing Remarks** – Dr. Christina Rinaldi

## POSTERS

**Christopher Armstrong & Linda McDonald** – A Concept Mapping of Resilient Adolescents' Experience of Non-Parent Adult Support

**Michelle Emmerling** – Stages of Change and the Working Alliance in Psychotherapy

**Jennifer Goudey** – Parent Involvement and Grade Three Reading Achievement

**Kristine Hagen** – Trauma, Yoga, and the Body: A Yoga Intervention for Survivors of Sexual Assault

**Lauren Johnson** – Introducing Videographic Inquiry: An Arts-Based, Reflexive Methodology

**Rochelle Major & William Whelton** – Terror Management Theory: Relationships and Career Aspirations in University Women

**Carla Petker** – Conducting a Qualitative Study: Researcher Stress and Self Care

Posters will be on display in the Graduate Lounge from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm

# EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY GRADUATE RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Dr. Markku Jahnuainen  
Assistant Professor of Special Education  
Department of Educational Psychology  
University of Alberta

Title: Comparative Special Education: Some Preliminary Findings and Ideas

Abstract: During early 2000, there has been a growing interest in different kinds of comparative studies in education. This boom is at least partly a result of the OECD PISA surveys (2000, 2003, 2006) comparing the educational attainment of 15 yrs old students across the world. The PISA database offers an interesting starting point for different kinds of analysis and speculations. During this presentation some ideas related to the special education, diversity issues and PISA 2006 results will be shown.

## ORAL PRESENTATIONS

**Presenters: James Sanders (Masters; School Psychology) & Olivia Lestideau (Masters; School Psychology)**

Title: Does Intelligence and Adaptive Behaviour Differentiate Asperger's Disorder from Autism?

Abstract: Presently, Asperger's Syndrome is considered a disorder on the autism spectrum, but diagnostic criteria stipulate that communicative ability in Asperger's is not qualitatively impaired. This suggests that autism and Asperger's are two qualitatively different disorders. However, research demonstrates that individuals with Asperger's tend to have a closer to normal cognitive ability, sparking controversy as to whether autism and Asperger's are degrees of the same disorder or are in fact qualitatively different. Although the research reviewed in this presentation supports the stance that intelligence may be the differentiating factor between Asperger's and autism, the notion that both are different degrees of the same disorder is not conclusive.

**Presenter: Shane Lynch (Doctoral; Special Education), Dr. Judy Cameron, & Dr. David Pierce**

Title: Intrinsic motivation as a mediating variable in the academic performance in children with autism.

Abstract: This research examined the effects of performance-based reinforcers presented in differing social contexts (adult-directed vs. child choice) on the academic intrinsic motivation of children with autism. Three children participated in a within-subject repeated measures design, consisting of multiple baseline and experimental phases. In baseline sessions, children were free to engage in either an academic task or a distracter. During the experimental intervention, children received reinforcers for completing math or language arts tasks in either autonomy-supportive (choice) or adult-directed (no-choice) contexts. The results suggest that when children with autism are offered performance-based reinforcers in contexts that support their autonomy (provide choice), their intrinsic motivation for academics is enhanced, and the experimental effects both maintain and generalize to novel situations.

**Presenter: Sara Plume (Masters; School Psychology)**

Title: Adolescents and Religion

Abstract: Canadian adolescents between the ages of 15 and 24 represent about 13% of all Canadians. Despite widespread research in the area of adolescent development, few studies have examined the personal religious beliefs of adolescents. A review of the current (but limited) research in this area suggests that religion has important influence on several different variables including: family relationships, peer interactions, risk behaviours, media use, and mental and emotional well-being. In addition, adolescence and young adulthood is the life stage when religious conversion is most likely to take

place. This presentation will highlight findings from current literature as well as discuss implications for future research.

**Presenter: Lindsey Leenaars (Doctoral; Counselling) & Dr. Christina Rinaldi**

Title: What? Bullying still occurs in University? A Mixed Method Study of Indirect Bullying in Emerging Adulthood

Abstract: This study examined the role of sex, gender role orientation, social representations of indirect aggression, and indicators of psychosocial adjustment in indirect aggression and victimization in an emerging adult sample. Forty-two participants (19 men and 23 women) completed the indirect subscale of the Direct and Indirect Aggression Scale, the Bem Sex Role Inventory, an indirect version of the EXPAGG, and the BASC-2 Self-Report College Form. A sub sample of 18 participants also completed journals regarding their daily social interactions. No sex differences were found for either indirect aggression or victimization. Indirect victimization was found to be the most significant predictor of indirect aggression. When controlling for indirect aggression, mania was the most significant predictor of indirect victimization. An inductive thematic analysis of the journals was conducted. The results were interpreted in relation to previous research and theory. Limitations, implications, and directions for future research were discussed.

**Presenter: Jenelle Job (Masters; School Psychology)**

Title: Playing Sick to Gain Attention: The Controversial Nature of Munchausen's Syndrome by Proxy

Abstract: Munchausen by Proxy (MBP) is a bizarre form of child abuse in which a parent—usually a mother—fabricates a child's symptoms or induces illness so that she can come to the child's rescue, thereby gaining the attention and support of the child's physician. Given the abundance of accusations and strangeness of the syndrome, MBP has become one of the most hotly contested psychiatric diagnoses in North America. On one side of the debate are psychiatrists and psychologists who say these cases occur regularly and often go unrecognized until serious complications arise in the child's condition. On the other side are wrongly accused mothers and families who have been torn apart as a result of court battles and separation of mothers from their children. Issues associated with this controversial syndrome are discussed, highlighting current research and expert opinion on the topic.

**Presenter: Deborah MacNiel (Masters; Counselling) & Dr. Robin Everall**

Title: Women's Midlife Journeys of Resilience

Abstract: Many women face profound challenges during midlife. Some adapt in healthy ways; others suffer in isolation, depression, or seek escape. Resilience may influence this, and is recognized not as a fixed trait but a resource that evolves over a lifetime. My thesis research focuses on experiences of middle-aged women who have suffered complete despair, yet have come to (re)embrace life. Through sharing in these unique

journeys factors that contributed to the women's shifts in perspective, experience, and value of life during that time are emerging as the research progresses. Feminist grounded theory methodology is used to discover these factors, positioning participants as experts on their own experiences and allowing for insights to arise from the data.

**Presenter: Holly Stack-Cutler (Doctoral; Psychological Studies in Education)**

Title: Engaging in Community-Based Research: An Examination of Researchers' Roles and Responsibilities

Abstract: Engaging in community-based research (CBR) requires a shift in researchers' roles and responsibilities in order to address community needs (Minkler, 2004). The paper begins with a claim that a divide exists between educational psychology research practices and community needs, and identifies key characteristics of CBR as they differ from traditional research (e.g., Israel et al. 1998). Next, ways that a CBR approach challenges researchers' roles and responsibilities is discussed. The paper concludes with an illustrative example of a CBR study as a way to bring meaning to the ideas presented. The goal of this paper is to provoke student researchers to consider the community context as an important research component as well as a way to improve community outcomes.

**Presenter: Oksana Babenko (Doctoral; Measurement, Evaluation, and Cognition), Dr. Jacqueline Leighton, Dr. Carol Okamoto, & Ken Cor (Masters; Measurement, Evaluation, and Cognition)**

Title: What do you believe? Role of epistemic beliefs on logical reasoning

Abstract: Our beliefs about the origins and complexity of knowledge (epistemic beliefs) can influence how we perform on academic tasks (Schommer, 1994). The purpose of the study was to investigate the role of epistemic beliefs on how students perform on abstract logical tasks, which are often found challenging by students and psychologists have been unable to explain why. By using structural equation modelling, we looked at how epistemic beliefs together with age, gender, and previous experience influenced student performance on categorical, quantified reasoning tasks. Our results indicate that there is a legitimate, though we admit tentative, relationship between student epistemic beliefs and performance on reasoning tasks. The implications of these results are discussed in light of student learning and achievement.

**Presenter: Kristine Hagen (Masters; Counselling) & Dr. Sophie Yohani**

Title: The Nature and Consequences of War Rape: Implications for Service Providers

Abstract: Rape that occurs in the context of war has distinct features, consequences, and implications for service providers. This review article examines existing literature on the nature and consequences of war rape through both a socio-cultural and feminist lens. The paper argues that pre-existing conditions of gender socialization, inequality, body objectification, and eroticism of violence, evoke sexualized violence during peace and give rise to rape as a tool during war. The individual and societal consequences of

wartime rape are examined and considerations for service providers are presented. The goal of the paper is to synthesize existing literature on a hidden form of violence and provide a framework for practice based on emerging models of service provision to survivors of wartime violence.

**Presenter: Wanwisa Hannok (Doctoral; Psychological Studies in Education)**

Title: A Review of Self-Regulated Learning and Students' Motivation

Abstract: This review examines the literature on self-regulated learning and motivation. Fourteen studies are summarized and analyzed in the following terms: the nature of participants, domains, self-regulated learning measures used, grade-level and gender differences in self-regulated learning, and the role of goal orientations and self-efficacy in self-regulated learning. Several studies suggest that students seem to make more frequent use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies when they advance in school. In this review, inconsistent results in gender differences in self-regulated learning were found, perhaps due to the use of different self regulated learning measures. On the other hand, the studies produced consistent results in the role of goal orientations and self-efficacy—these motivational beliefs have positive relations to self-regulated learning.

**Presenter: Marion Stewart (Masters; Counselling) & Dr. Derek Truscott**

Title: Female Therapists' Experience of Client Sexual Advances

Abstract: Sexual attraction was emphasized by Freud as important in psychotherapy because it occurred so often. He attributed it to the therapeutic situation and not the charms of the therapist. There are many unanswered questions. How frequently does it occur? How do therapists cope? Do they discuss it with their clients? Do they consult with colleagues? How do they respond or when and how do they refrain from responding? Unlike sexual violations, sexual attraction likely occurs quite often, which has implications for everyday therapeutic practice. Yet, there is very little research and virtually none from female therapists' perspective. In a thematic analysis of interview data, I will be exploring how female therapists respond to client sexual advances.

**Presenter: Andrea Krol (Masters; School Psychology)**

Title: Post-Concussion Symptom Reporting using Different Interview Techniques

Abstract: The measurement of post-concussion symptoms (PCS) is an important assessment tool when evaluating outcomes of concussion in athletes. This study explored whether differences in how data was collected would impact the disclosure of concussive symptoms. College athletes were randomly assigned to complete a 21-item Post-Concussion Symptom Scale (PCSS) in one of two ways. Half the sample completed the questionnaire on their own and half completed the PCSS with a trained assistant who verbally read the questions. 117 college athletes participated in the study. Independent sample t-tests were used to examine the difference in total scores between the two groups. Results were statistically significant for the two groups ( $p=0.047$ ) for total scores on the PCSS. Athletes endorse more symptoms of concussion when the

PCSS is administered as a self report questionnaire as compared to an interview style administration.

**Presenter: Anoosha Aghakhani (Doctoral; Counselling)**

Title: The Career Development of First and Second Generation Iranian-Canadians

Abstract: The present study examines the factors that facilitate and impede the career development of first and second generation Iranian-Canadians, as well as generational differences with respect to acceptable and unacceptable career options. Fourteen participants (five first generation Iranian-Canadians and nine second generation Iranian-Canadians) volunteered to participate in this study. Constructivist grounded theory supported by semi-structured interviews and the constant comparative method of data analysis were utilized to extract themes from the data. A grounded theory model specific to the career development of first and second generation Iranian-Canadian participants emerged describing the influence of contextual factors, such as immigration, access to opportunities, loss, fear, unhelpful educators, and the dream for a better life. Implications for researchers and practitioners are discussed.

**Presenter: Jennifer Barber (Masters; Special Education), Dr. Tim Loreman, Dr. Judy Lupart, & Dr. Donna McGhie-Richman**

Title: Young Children's Views of Inclusive Education: A Quantitative Look at Successful Inclusive Practices in Rural Alberta

Abstract: While research on inclusion has gained prominence in recent years, a particular area that has been understudied is inclusive practices in rural regions. The Pembina Hills Project (PHP) is a three-year, multi-phase study investigating the practices of a rural Alberta school board that has strong inclusion policies. Phase one of the study involved the administration of surveys to parents, teachers, administrators, program assistants and students from Grade 1 to Grade 12 that identify factors known to contribute to successful inclusive practices. Conclusions from the preliminary results for students in grade 1 and 2 are discussed in terms of how these data complement and add to the current academic literature concerning best practices in inclusive education.

**Presenter: Olivia Lestideau (Masters; School Psychology), Dr. Marty Mrazik, & Dr. Carmen Rasmussen**

Title: Attention & Executive Functioning in Children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Abstract: Damage to the central nervous system resulting from prenatal exposure to alcohol is associated with numerous lifelong disruptions in cognitive and behavioural functioning. Previous research has identified executive functioning as an area of deficit that is particularly influential in day-to-day functioning. This presentation will highlight preliminary results from the first author's Masters thesis. Twenty seven children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) were compared to twenty seven children with typical neurological integrity on the core Attention and Executive Functioning subtests from the NEPSY. Not only did the children with FASD show statistically significant deficits in planning, set-shifting, organization and attention, they also seemed to approach

problem-solving less efficiently than their same-age peers. Implications in educational settings will be discussed.

**Presenter: Augustine Metadio Gundula (Doctoral; Measurement, Evaluation, and Cognition)**

Title: Evaluating the Inter-rater Reliability of MSCE Biology Examination Scores

Abstract: Although constructed-response item formats in testing are popular, and the candidature is increasing at an alarming rate, it becomes difficult for these tests to be scored by one rater. Therefore the reliability of the scores obtained from these tests becomes questionable. In this study, the author evaluated inter-rater reliability of MSCE biology test scores. Data from 200 examinees in the 2002 Biology constructed response items were used to assess the degree of inter-rater reliability of biology test scores. Scoring differences were most pronounced when looking at the percentage of questions scored exactly the same at specific score points, and the percentage of exact agreement corrected for chance. The implications for future research in this area are discussed.

## POSTER PRESENTATIONS

**Presenter: Christopher Armstrong (Doctoral; Counselling) & Dr. Linda McDonald**

Title: A Concept Mapping of Resilient Adolescents' Experience of Non-Parent Adult Support

Abstract: Researchers have established that the support of a caring, nonparent adult may do much to promote the resilience of adolescents experiencing extraordinary adversity. Despite this circumstance, however, this "protective factor" is not well understood beyond a few distinguishing features. Consequently, the purpose of this exploratory study is to deepen our understanding of the nature of the nonparent adult support that resilient adolescents have experienced as helpful to their overcoming of extreme hardship. To this end, resilient adolescents have been sought to participate in a concept mapping. Current conceptualizations of adolescent resilience and the protective factor of nonparent adult support are explored, related research is overviewed, the concept mapping process is outlined, and the potential benefits of this study are discussed.

**Presenter: Michelle Emmerling (Doctoral; Counselling)**

Title: Stages of Change and the Working Alliance in Psychotherapy

Abstract: This study investigated the hypothesis that the working alliance mediates the relationship between the stages of change and symptom improvement. It also investigated the relationship between these variables in clients that moved to a higher stage by termination. Sixty-two adult clients receiving counselling at a community mental health clinic completed measures of the variables after the first, fifth and second last sessions. The working alliance was found to be a mediating variable. In addition, clients who moved from the contemplation to the action stage reported stronger working alliances, less psychological distress, and more symptom improvement than clients who remained in the contemplation stage. Further support was found for the importance of establishing and maintaining a strong working alliance.

**Presenter: Jennifer Goudey (Doctoral; School Psychology)**

Title: Parent Involvement and Grade Three Reading Achievement

Abstract: Parental involvement (PI) is a multifaceted construct. It is believed that increased PI is associated with gains in academic achievement. However, research findings vary depending on the component of PI studied and the outcome measured (Fan & Chen 2001). While children's reading to parents at home is a frequently reported PI activity; the nature of specific parental home reading practices has not been studied extensively. This study examined the role of PI in reading with grade three children. Ninety-two parents completed a home literacy questionnaire. Children were administered a brief reading assessment. Contrary to much of the PI literature, but

consistent with the work of Epstein (2001), this study found PI activities to be negatively correlated with reading achievement.

**Presenter: Kristine Hagen (Masters; Counselling)**

Title: Trauma, Yoga, and the Body: A Yoga Intervention for Survivors of Sexual Assault

Abstract: Research investigating yoga as an adjunctive treatment for women who are experiencing the traumatic diagnosis of cancer found women report less depression, stress, and anxiety after engaging in a yoga program. Similarly, women who have experienced sexual assault often report symptoms of stress, depression, and anxiety. Based on the demonstrated benefits of yoga, the disconnect most women feel after experiencing sexualized violence, and the trend in psychotherapy to work with trauma at a bodily level, there is a need to determine if yoga is beneficial for survivors of sexual assault. Combining current mindfulness programs, group therapy, and my expertise as a yoga instructor, I propose a model for a group therapy integrating yoga. The proposed area of research has not yet been investigated and future research is suggested.

**Presenter: Lauren Johnson (Doctoral; Counselling)**

Title: Introducing Videographic Inquiry: An Arts-Based, Reflexive Methodology

Abstract: Responding to the feminist call to broaden psychology's research framework (Smith, 1979), I introduce *videographic inquiry*, a qualitative methodology that blends feminist values with arts-based research methods. Designed for a dissertation exploring women's accounts of unplanned pregnancy, this research method conforms to the feminist research imperative to start with one's own experience by locating the researcher as central to the research process. This methodology involves researchers and participants creating video projects about their experiences and video-recording their ongoing conversations over the course of the creative project. Meaning is derived from analysis of these conversations and the various incarnations of the video project over time. The methodology is defined and outlined in the context of a proposed dissertation research project.

**Presenter: Rochelle Major (Doctoral; Counselling) & Dr. William Whelton**

Title: Terror Management Theory: Relationships and Career Aspirations in University Women

Abstract: Terror management theory has well documented evidence showing that romantic relationships serve as existential death anxiety buffers (V. Florian, M. Mikulincer, & G. Hirschberger, 2002). This study examined the possibility that career aspirations, instead of romantic relationships, serve a buffering function for some career-oriented single women in university settings. One hundred and ninety-nine female university students, 94 who were single and 105 who were in committed romantic relationships, were asked to imagine a threat to a relationship, to a career aspiration, or to a control. Death thought accessibility was subsequently measured. Romantic attachment was also assessed for potential moderating effects. Relationships

were generally found to be a more powerful death anxiety buffer than career aspirations for both single and committed women. Attachment style did not play a significant role in these findings. Results were discussed in light of terror management theory, existential philosophy, and feminist literature.

**Presenter: Carla Petker (Doctoral; Counselling)**

Title: Conducting a Qualitative Study: Researcher Stress and Self Care

Abstract: In qualitative research the researcher is the "instrument" through which the data are collected and analyzed. Through prolonged engagement with traumatic stories researchers may experience compassion fatigue symptoms such as depression and anxiety, loss of focus and perhaps eventual discontinuation of the study. Much care and consideration is involved in establishing safety for research participants yet there is little acknowledgement of potential risks to the researcher in research ethics proposals. Connolly and Reilly (2007) distinguish the researcher as part of a scholarly community as well as a human community. The key factors of researcher stress are grouped into two areas; Scholarly Research (participants, context, and method) and the Human side of Research (researcher background, social context, resources, and impact).

*Thank you to all of our presenters!*