

# On intersectionality: Decolonization, inclusion, and diversity-focused pedagogies

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*Abstract: The focus of this Special Issue (English) is to divert attention from the insidious global discourses centered on the re-assertion of white dominance through anti-immigration policies, and shift the conversation to one centered on the important work being done in graduate educational research that acknowledge our history and reflects on our role(s) in the continued treatment of Indigenous peoples and people of colour within Canada. This is with the aim to engage in anti-oppressive pedagogies that not only envisage reconciliation, but that consider action towards reconciliation. This is evidenced through a discourse analysis of the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework in Ontario (Currie-Patterson & Watson), a quanti-qualitative study on racism and reverse racism with teachers in Alberta (Lorenz), an exploration of the historical and contemporary impacts of racism on children of colour in our schools (Brady), and the examination of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's First Report and the consideration of a context-responsive pedagogical framework for an education for reconciliation (Siemens).*

*Keywords: Settler Colonialism, Racism, Reconciliation, Intersectionality*

## Editorial

As I reflect on this Special Issue, it is important to acknowledge the land beneath my feet. The farm where I live, purchased almost a hundred years ago by my grandfather, rests/resides on Treaty Two territory. As an immigrant, my grandfather like other settlers at the time, looked to Canada to provide land and resources that could not be found on the European continent. His migration and subsequent status as a land owner made him a settler on Indigenous lands (Tuck & Yang, 2012); as his descendent, I too share the same title. In locating myself here as an educator and researcher, “seeking to work anti-oppressively” (Neeaganagwedgin, 2013, p. 323), I too must acknowledge that I am a settler. In doing so, I begin the task of understanding my responsibilities within settler colonialism.

This year marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Confederation, and while this colonialist milestone makes for good publicity and celebration, it is necessary, however unsettling as non-Indigenous Canadians, to acknowledge our history, and our continued role(s), in the violence, displacement, and erasure of Indigenous peoples from their lands. By celebrating 150 years of colonization—focusing primarily on nation-building exercises and ignoring oppressive practices—we publicly mute the work being done within the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada; Celebration removes the focus away from healing to a *move of innocence* (Malwhinney as cited in Tuck & Yang, 2012) by settlers, “which problematically attempt[s] to reconcile settler guilt and complicity” (p. 3).

This Special Issue was conceived in part to counter the insidious global discourses of anti-immigrant policies and racist ideologies gaining popularity across the world. We are not ignorant to the fact that these conditions have always been present within our societies, but the current political climate, especially within the United States, aims to uphold colonialist logic and seeks to preserve the discrimination and oppression of the Other in racialized and gendered ways. Our hope, with this issue, is to disrupt these global narratives by highlighting the work being done within educational research in Canada to focus on pedagogies that work to subvert and dismantle homogeneous, heteronormative visions of our world.

To place intersectionality at the fore, is to acknowledge that the truths of people's lives are messy, and issues of power within this messiness are enacted in multifarious ways:

Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity in the world, in people, and in human experiences...generally shaped by many factors in diverse and mutually influencing ways. When it comes to social inequality, people's lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other. (Collins & Bilge, 2016)

Thus, our authors in this issue seek to investigate and explore the intersections within and across anti-racism/racism, decolonization/colonization, actions and inactions present within Canadian education through the *First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework in Ontario*; reverse racism and teachers; the historical and contemporary impacts of racism within our schools; and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Final Report. These explorations are with the aim to bring responsive, inclusive, and critical pedagogies, which seek to interrogate our history as settlers, into our settler classrooms for meaningful contributions to, and the honouring of, the processes of reconciliation and anti-oppressive education.

### **Overview of the Special Issue's Contributions (English)**

The first contribution in this Special Issue is from Nathalie Currie-Patterson and Kaitlyn Watson (Western University). Their research "A Policy, a 'Priority,' an Unfinished Project: *The Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework*" examines this policy framework by employing a critical discourse analysis and by drawing on theories of critical pedagogy, decolonizing education, and policy enactment. Through their analysis, the authors argue that their findings reveal discourse that serves to undermine the effectiveness of the policy framework and the possibilities for it to be successfully implemented within Ontario schools.

In Danielle Lorenz's (University of Alberta) quanti-qualitative research study, "Reversing Racism in the Time of Reconciliation?: Settler Colonialism, Race, and Alberta Teachers," she explores and examines how members of the Alberta Teacher's Association verbalize their understandings of prejudice, discrimination, racism, and reverse racism. Using reverse racism as a starting point, and using the theoretical framework of settler colonialism, she argues that both racism and settler colonialism impede the processes of reconciliation for White Canadians.

Janelle Brady's (University of Toronto) work "Education for Whom?: Exploring Systems of Oppression and Domination" aims to understand the historical foundations of racism in Canada. Through an exploratory investigative approach, she examines how these historical foundations impact students of colour in current contexts within Canadian K-12 education. She works to interrogate the position of people of colour through a deficit lens and offers a way to counter this narrative by reimagining educative spaces that value difference.

In Jeremy Siemens (University of Manitoba) work, "Education for Reconciliation: Pedagogy for a Canadian Context," he reflects on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Final Report and its particular emphasis on education. Conscientious of dealing with systems of oppression within specific contexts, he considers a context-responsive pedagogical framework for an education for reconciliation, which incorporates both critical pedagogy and Indigenous knowledges.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Joelle Nagle:** Joelle Nagle is the 2017 Managing Editor for the CJNSE. She is a Ph.D. candidate in Educational Studies (Curriculum) at Western University, in London, Ontario. Her doctoral work investigates multiliteracies pedagogy within the professional learning of preservice teachers in a Bachelor of Education program and in-service teachers in a Professional Masters of Education Program. Within the last 16 years, Joelle has worked in many roles as an educator from elementary and secondary school education, to post-secondary education at both the University and College levels. She has worked with the CJNSE for several years in the roles of peer reviewer, copy editor, review mentor, and Associate Editor. Joelle would like to continue to encourage Canadian graduate students to become involved in the peer review process to help establish and cultivate their researcher identities within their specific fields and communities of practice.