
Introduction to Special Issue on Graduate Student Research in Counselling Psychology

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It's all too cliché to describe the student years as the best of one's life. Drinking espressos at the local café (or perhaps a pint at the university pub) and arguing over whether Carl Rogers really wrote that nasty memo to the president of the University of Wisconsin. Was studenthood ever a time of quiet contemplation? The truth is that the life of a student is difficult, hectic, and protracted, even for those who excel at it. Students of each generation are asked to take more courses, get higher grades, apply for more grants, and accrue more client hours. Questions emerge in regards to whether we are overloading them with too much information or allowing enough time for personal insight, growth, and professional socialization. We teach students how to help others take care of themselves, yet leave them little time for their own self-care. Needless to say, the journey of studenthood brings with it moments of joy, accomplishment, anxiety, and fatigue. Despite the challenges, however, we have every reason to be proud of the quality of counsellors entering the profession each year. They are dedicated, talented, and conscientious. This issue was born of the idea of a student, and it celebrates the scholarly talent of counselling students across Canada.

There are several tasks that lie ahead for students undertaking graduate studies. Perhaps among the top are learning and applying skills related to clinical case conceptualization and counselling as well as research. All invoke a mixture of emotions to the newly initiated student. It is research, however, that many students try to (initially) distance themselves from. Despite this, the opportunity to study and make a unique contribution to the counselling literature brings many students to embrace the role of researcher. As was impressed upon us early in the organizing of this issue, students continually make meaningful contributions to the field of counselling through their research. With the wisdom and mentorship of faculty supervisors, students not only gain a valuable skill set and initiation into the "community of research," they also leave graduate school as informed consumers and translators of research.

Our initial call for student proposals yielded over 30 submissions, one of the largest responses the *Canadian Journal of Counselling* has received in relation to a special issue. From these, six were selected and will compose this issue as well as the next. Unlike previous special issues, these articles do not represent any thematic content beyond acknowledging that they were produced while the principal authors were students (many have since graduated).

In the first article, Richard L. Harrison takes the reader on a delightful and personal tour reflecting upon the development and movement toward embracing an identity as “researcher” and “scholar.” As noted, such an identity is, at first, foreign to many graduate students. It can also be rather intimidating and Harrison provides a nice account of his experiences, which will be of value to both the novice and seasoned student (and professor as well). This article is followed by David G. Schaefer and Gina Wong-Wylie’s timely research on psychopharmacology and Canadian counsellors. Positioned at the interface of the increasing use of psychotropic medications and the role counsellors may have in this domain, Schaefer and Wong-Wylie offer readers an intriguing glimpse into the perspectives and training of Canadian counsellors.

The third article in this special issue is by Pauline Beharry and Sharon Crozier, who explore racism and identity as experienced by second-generation Canadian women of South Asian descent. Using a phenomenological approach, the authors offer readers a rich understanding, through five themes and participant narratives, in relation to how these women negotiated and constructed their identities. The fourth article by Angèle Palmer and Jessica Parish bring readers to consider issues of social justice and the importance of engaging graduate students in this very salient domain. Recognizing that social justice has long been a part of the field of counselling, the authors suggest further embedding such a focus within the research and training activities of students.

The fifth and sixth articles will follow in the next issue of the *Canadian Journal of Counselling*. The fifth article, by Ivana Djuraskovic and Nancy Arthur, addresses the experiences of former Yugoslavian refugees. The authors adopt a heuristic approach to explore the concepts of acculturation and identity reconstruction. They invite readers to consider how such constructs unfold over time involving a much more dynamic and fluid process than a simple linear progression. The sixth article, written by Greg Harris, explores the relationship between community-based research (CBR) and counselling practice. Beginning with a description of CBR, Harris outlines several areas of “common ground,” ultimately extending an invitation to readers to consider CBR as finding a comfortable home within counselling (and vice versa).

We would like to extend our thanks to the students who authored these articles and the professors who directly and indirectly shared in the process. Appreciation is also extended to each of the peer reviewers as well as the *Journal’s* former editor, Dr. Vivian Lalande, and editorial assistant, Lori Mac. We thank as well the many students who submitted a proposal for this special issue. It was a genuine pleasure to read a selection of the diverse and dynamic counselling research being conducted by graduate students across Canada. The choosing was difficult, the process enjoyable, and we hope that you find the end result both interesting and informative.