

Editorial

This past year, I have had the privilege of being on sabbatical, a once-in-every-seven-year opportunity to divest from the daily duties of university life to pursue projects and interests for professional development. It has been a rich and productive 12 months. In Spring 2023, with my sabbatical on the horizon, I decided that it would be a perfect moment to invite guest editors to produce our 28th issue of *LEARNing Landscapes*. This allowed me to participate in the background and has provided new voices for our constituency. As you will see, it was a good move.

Bronwen Low is an Associate Professor in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education and Jessica Ruglis is an Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Counselling and Psychology, both in the Faculty of Education at McGill. Bronwen's research interests include the implications of popular youth culture for curriculum theory, literacy studies, and pedagogy; community-media projects and pedagogies; translanguaging and the multilingual Montreal hip-hop scene; and the pedagogical implications of the lifestories of Montrealers who have survived genocide and other human rights violations. Jessica's work centers on participatory, critical race/ethnic, social justice, feminist, and inclusive approaches to research and teaching in the areas of public education, public health, justice, and youth development. Together they have made a wonderful guest editorial team for this important and timely issue. I congratulate them and thank them heartily for their excellent work.

I must take this opportunity to thank Michael Canuel, CEO of LEARN Quebec, who has steadfastly supported *LEARNing Landscapes* since its inception in 2007 and continues to provide the OJS platform and staff support to publish our open-access, peer-reviewed, and free online journal. It has been a pleasure to work with Eve Krakow, our new copy editor who took over from David Mitchell after the 2023 issue. She didn't miss a beat and, like David, has worked diligently and extremely effectively behind the scenes to maintain the quality of the journal. Last, but certainly not least, kudos and gratitude go to Lea Rackley, a recent PhD graduate from the Department of Integrated Studies in Education who took on the role of assistant guest editor and seamlessly managed the myriad of important details to keep the process moving from submission to publication.

I wish you good reading/viewing.

LBK

This issue of *LEARNing Landscapes* looks "Towards new futures of youth development: Critical and sustainable approaches to youth wellbeing in complex times." Since we launched the call for proposals, these times now also include concurrent global genocides and wars. In response, we have watched movements of young people on campuses across the world protesting as a way of claiming the new futures they want to see: embodied enactments of critical and sustainable approaches, praxes and pedagogies of youth wellbeing—and education—in complex times. Whether we look towards young

people in the United States who have become policy advocates and student activists in the face of mass school shootings, racism as a public health issue, and restrictions for gender-diverse children and reproductive rights; or to university students engaging in popular forms of education, free libraries, collective and abolitionist approaches to care, and resource sharing within the encampment movement, drawing on long histories of transnational liberation movements, young people are engaging in powerful forms of policy advocacy that ask to see, for example, where budgets and investments are being spent and made. Divestment from arms and guns everywhere is a material way to save young peoples' lives. To draw new lines in old sand, youth are engaging with their world in ways that reflect the different worlds that we all will be required to live in, through the one in which they will be finding their ways and selves.

Cases of structural violence against the conditions of life threaten youths' ability as individuals, communities, and collective societies to flourish and stay alive. Young people increasingly live in a world of economic and housing precarity, generalized and increasing environmental hazards and disasters, food insecurity, climate and war refugees, the lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, emerging health issues associated with climate change, and chronic stress. There are rising rates of depression, anxiety, and a sense of purposelessness. Each of these crises change educational systems: new students in new places, school closures and heat-related illnesses for children whose school buildings cannot cope with increasing and protracted heat. These also force young people to ask different questions about what they want and what they *can* do differently, and what they need from adults to support them in getting there. We are also reminded that teachers are a driving force of the working economy, and the same crises that befall students are shaping the lives of teachers and their families. As such, we are invited to dissolve the divide between students and teachers.

Patterns in educational pathways of and towards completion are altering, along with how school is delivered and organized, and youth face new challenges with transitions to employment, training, and further education. Young people are increasingly squeezed between a world that is not their own, one that they don't want to see, and unchanging expectations for what their life ought to be. Through this are questions about what education *is* needed to help youth get to where they want to go. We are invited to think also about education as something broader, something everywhere, and not just located within schools and schooling.

These spatiotemporal demands can be asymmetric to self-determination. What needs to be rethought, redone, reshaped, retimescaped? How might we soften and open up expectations about time to completion, or the age or developmental stage to which post-secondary attendance is tethered? Furthermore, how are we in turn being softened and opened by the present circumstances? How are the parameters of what counts as meaning and purpose, or a life well lived, changing or expanding? What does it mean to be well in the world that we have inherited, created, and continue to make?

Theories and approaches to supporting healthy development of young people might do more to root in decolonial, feminist, queer, critical disability, intersectional, and intersectoral frames to advance structural ways of re-envisioning learning. These ways must account for the reality that a) education is changing, b) the needs of educators and the lives of educators are changing, c) the relationship of

educational degrees to occupational pathways is also changing, and d) housing is education, food availability is education, health is education. The articles in this issue seek to ask questions of and about youth wellbeing and offer transformative ways to rethink how we *do* youth wellbeing—in the lives of young people, families, communities, and teachers.

Papers engage with how to support the flourishing of young people, and how we might conceive of *and* practice (enact) youth wellbeing, what **Noah Asher Golden** describes as a “reframing” of the topic. For **Ramona Elke**, crisis reframes what we consider the problems in education to be, and she notes that youth distress points to new ways of learning. In this way, articles in the collection write against the grain of normative youth development models. They draw upon sociocultural, critical, asset-based, community-led, participatory, and other socially transformative theories and frameworks. They are informed by critical race theory, feminist affect theory, queer theory, and Indigenous epistemologies. Papers also explore dimensions of what thinking about youth wellbeing means as a critical, embodied praxis and pedagogies for the people who work with young people. The articles draw upon a wide range of concepts for challenging and revisioning youth wellbeing, including **Cory Legassic’s** exploration of “collective care,” **Melissa Morris’** notion of “compassionate pedagogies,” and **Kate McCabe’s** “ecological interdependence” in which we enter the “wild fray of life.”

Themes and Throughlines

Our call attracted contributions from a wide range of fields and disciplines, writing genres, and authorial (overlapping) positionalities, including educational and health researchers, poets and visual artists, community organizers and educators. Contributors to this issue also include youth artists, poets and photographers, and community-based practitioners and scholars. There were some strong common threads across contributions.

A significant number feature arts-based research, including via arts methods (e.g., Photovoice, poetry) and form (e.g., Métissage, autoethnography). They also argue for the value that the arts and cultural production (including spoken word and music-making) can have in programs supporting youth in and out of school. This emphasis speaks to the vital role that *LEARNing* Landscapes has played as a home for arts and narrative inquiry, as well as the growing recognition across fields, including public health, that the arts can contribute to our wellbeing as learners, researchers, educators, and people more generally. In a connected thread, many of the pieces theorize from and through stories and counterstories, representing the importance of narrative to identity and meaning-making.

Indigenous epistemologies and teachings are another important throughline in the collection, as Indigenous and Canadian scholars and educators challenge and seek to change colonial ways of doing and thinking about wellbeing and learning in relation to Land, ancestors, and each other. This attention to Indigenous knowledge is both an acknowledgment of and attempt to redress historical harm and ignorance, and speaks to states of crisis, including climate, mental, and geo-political, that colonial modes of being have produced.

A global crisis shaping many papers in the issue is the COVID-19 pandemic, whose impacts on young people's schooling continue to be felt, but which also opened some promising possibilities for doing school and work differently. Crises of health, and family tragedy, are also prompts for some of the most self-reflexive and moving articles in this issue. We see an integration of Black feminist, queer, and decolonial theories as intellectual throughlines forward.

Finally, many of the articles seem driven by a need to also research differently. These include the art-based theme already mentioned, but also the many participatory and community-based studies. And many of the pieces are dialogues between collaborators, a recognition that in this important work, we require each other.

Introduction to the Articles in this Special Issue

This special issue showcases a range of approaches to youth wellbeing, from primarily conceptual explorations to empirical studies grounded in formal and informal sites of education, mentorship, and care.

Pieces which are primarily conceptual include those by Elke, McCabe, and Morris, offering new frameworks and visions of pedagogies for wellbeing. Elke's article, "The Kids Are Alright: Changing Perceptions for a New Wellbeing," is a *Métissage* weaving together poetry, stories, and Indigenous Knowledges. It urges us to learn from youths' expressions of distress in times of crisis, understanding these expressions as wisdom about the causes of the crisis itself rather than just symptoms of it. Through stories of community healing, Elke helps us imagine education that creates wellbeing. Through a hermeneutic inquiry, in a piece entitled "Come, I Will Walk With You," McCabe invites us to walk in relation to questions around wellness, ecological interdependence, pedagogy, and human/more-than-human belongings that are enlivened by a cancer diagnosis. This pushes these questions into "the wild fray of life," practicing pedagogies that ask what it means to live well in the irresolvable present with youth. Morris offers an autoethnographic exploration, "Reflexive Inquiry's Impact on Mindful Teaching for Student Wellbeing." Through storytelling, Morris explores trauma-informed pedagogy through reflexive praxis, and asks how teachers might develop compassionate pedagogies that are sensitive and responsive to students' experiences of trauma by learning through and reflecting upon trauma sensitivity through their own experiences.

Another primarily conceptual contribution, set within the realm of higher education, is Legassic's "Towards a Theory of Collective Care as Pedagogy in Higher Education." Legassic's framework for collective care as pedagogy in higher education walks through feminist theories of affect toward pedagogies for building affective solidarity. He grounds this conceptual work in the realities of teaching in higher education (and specifically an alternative college or CEGEP program in Quebec) during times of crisis, times that call for deeper understandings of our interdependencies and need for care. Another study of an alternative approach to education is Golden's research on the *Conexiones* alternative school program in San Sebastien, California. "Reframing Youth Wellbeing Through Community-Engaged Learning" examines the implications of *Conexiones* for youth wellbeing through one student's experience, attending to its community art collaborations in which youth "(re)fram[e] who they have been, who they are now, and who they can collectively become." In turn, Golden invites us to reframe school with students' wellbeing at the center.

Frances Moore and **Peter Gouzouasis** return us to the beginnings of our journeys in formal education, in “An Early Childhood Educator’s Learning Story in the Time of COVID.” Through autoethnography and a/r/tographic inquiry, they use vibrant narratives to explore the creativity necessary for teaching through the COVID-19 pandemic. Weaving art-based methods in the early childhood classroom with unprecedented teaching conditions, these narratives embody a/r/tography as a living practice, exploring its possibilities for pedagogical invention. Also working to revitalize ECE, **Monica McGlynn-Stewart**, **Nicola Maguire**, **Lori Budge**, **Ana-Luisa Sales**, and **Elise Patterson** ask, “How does land-based learning and the mentorship of Indigenous pedagogies change urban early childcare?” Reporting on a study of the work of 20 educators in ten childcare centers, in “Learning From Indigenous Perspectives: Wellbeing in the Early Years,” the team examines what happens when Canadian children’s earliest experiences in school center Indigenous perspectives and land-based learning. These lasting implications stretch far ahead of us. Also drawing upon Indigenous epistemologies, **Alyssa Mayer**, in “Attuning to Children’s Layered Life-Making Through Relational Learning and Assessment,” explores the “life-making” practices of Grade 4 children, centering them as knowledge holders. Through storytelling and a humble inquiry alongside Indigenous pedagogies and relational curriculum, she questions curriculum and assessment from the angle of the goals of life-making (“What does it mean to showcase knowledge?”). Mayer argues that children’s own knowledges and gifts should shape the schools around them, rather than the other way around. Similarly focused on the lives of children, **Matthew Yanko** explores the importance of playground relationships, in “Maintaining Playground Relationships Through Music During a Pandemic: An Action Research Inquiry.” The author examines the pedagogies within youths’ maintenance of relationships through music activities and play during the pandemic. Learning from youths’ determination to revive peer connections during distressing times, Yanko asks how play and music nurture the students’ relational instincts toward their collective wellbeing.

Given the growing recognition of the importance of holistic approaches to wellbeing, it should not surprise that three of the contributions feature physical and/or health education and support. Two of the papers are based in K–12 education. In “School Sport for All: An Inclusive Developmental Framework to Improve Participation,” **Lauren Sulz** and **Douglas Gleddie** reimagine a child-centered and wellbeing-centered framework for school athletics, placing comprehensive school health and whole-child education within the aims of school sports programs. **Jennifer Gruno** and **Sandra Gibbons** use the action research methodology “Photovoice” to empower students to share their experiences in nature throughout an outdoor physical education unit. “Nature-Based Physical Activity in Pictures: A Photovoice Unit in (and Beyond) Physical and Health Education” showcases youth photo-and-caption stories of learning survival and life skills such as starting a fire or tying a proper knot and learning yoga together. In this way, the authors highlight the sense of connection students expressed—to themselves, to each other, and to nature—reframing the focus of physical education toward community and belonging. The third paper on this topic, “Seeking Care: Youth’s Counterstories Within the Context of Mental Health,” is set in the context of mental health care systems. **Jinny Menon**, **Michelle Lavoie**, **Vera Caine**, **Margot Jackson**, and **Holly Symonds-Brown** share counterstories as “touchstones of strength and wellbeing” for youth navigating the racialized and hetero- and cis-normative assumptions of mental health care systems. Through these counterstories, the youth Menon and colleagues work with imagine futures for themselves and fill the institutional gaps in our health care systems with their voices, agency, and calls for better

care. **Mary Frances Buckley-Marudas** and her team (**Rosalinda Godinez, Karmel Abutaleb, Gray Cooper, Margaret Rahill, Drew Retherford, Sarah Schwab, Taylor Zepp, and Adam Voight**) return us to a high school setting, in “Why Teachers Integrate YPAR in their Teaching: Cultivating Youth Wellbeing, Student Voice, and Social Justice.” This article reflects on Youth Participatory Action Research from the perspective of high school educators who have integrated it into their classrooms. By exploring the teachers’ motivations for using YPAR, they urge us to consider how these motivations impact the success of the projects and enhance everyday praxis, shedding light on “how teachers make room for young people as decision-makers and leaders.”

Similarly committed to social justice informed approaches to youth wellbeing, our three remaining articles all explore innovative community-based initiatives supporting socially marginalized young people. In “Safe Spaces and Critical Places: Youth Programming and Community Support,” **Alexandra Arraiz Matute** and **Emmanuel Tabi** go through Critical Race Theory (CRT) and the narratives of youth to analyze the importance of after-school programming in promoting the wellbeing of Latinx and Black youth in Toronto. They argue for the critical pedagogies of these spaces as a “vital bridge” for youth, helping them realize their own transformative potentials. “Reimagining Educational Success: Lessons on Support, Wellbeing, and Trust from Community-Grounded Research with Black Families and Gender-Diverse Youth” is grounded in a dialogue between two community-based researchers, **Tanya Matthews** and **Jayne Malenfant**, working in support of low-income Black families/youth and gender-diverse homeless youth in Tio’tia:ke/Montréal. It calls for trust-building and community leadership to support youth navigating unwelcoming institutions, and highlights the importance of relational approaches to research. A dialogue between collaborators, “Making With Place: Community Artists Theorizing Change” by **Charlotte Lombardo** and **Phyllis Novak** explores the potential of community arts for worldbuilding, creating new practices of imagination and repair. Through a place-based public art project that engaged QT/BIPOC (Queer, Trans, Black, Indigenous, People of Color)-identifying young people as artist-researchers in a participatory process, Lombardo and Novak follow queerings of place toward new theories of social change.

Finally, our special issue includes three commentaries, two in the form of dialogues and one featuring Chalet Kent’s *Que du Love* (Only Love) art exhibit held at the Maison de la Culture Côte-des-Neiges in Montreal in 2023, including photos and poetry. The first dialogue takes place between Cree singer-songwriter **Siibii Petawabano** and artist-educator and researcher **Melissa-Ann Ledo**, entitled “I Would Not Have Made That Leap: Art as the Vehicle to Tell Your Story, Connect and Build Relationships.” In this piece, they discuss the development and significance of the Cree School Board’s Mik^w Chiyâm secondary school program that Melissa co-founded and Siibii experienced first as a student and now as an artist-in-residence. The second dialogue, between **Karl-André St-Victor**, Executive Director of Chalet Kent, and **Jessica Ruglis**, issue co-editor, is entitled “Airglow: Young People and Wellbeing.”

We also include pieces from the *Que du Love* exhibition, which was led by photographer **Amelia Segre** and Chalet Kent staff, multimedia director **Marilia Beltrame**, interviewer and writer **Fabiana Diaz**, and curator Karl André St-Victor. The five original photographs featured in this issue were taken on 35 mm

film by Amelia Segrera, and each features a young person accompanied by their words about love, which are excerpts taken from their interviews: Loki, Von, Kiara, Gonz, and Lilya. We also include three poems, in French, from student Rania Guerasse, exploring some of the visceral and spiritual intensities of love and heartbreak. For more on the project, see: <https://www.instagram.com/quedulovemt/>.

Together, these commentaries give voice to the thoughts, passions, and poetics of front-line youth workers and youth themselves, complementing other forms of inquiry into approaches to youth and wellbeing in complex times.

Acknowledgment

We'd like to extend our deepest gratitude to Dr. Lea Rackley for her stellar editorial support of this special issue. We'd also like to thank the reviewers who each provided excellent scholarly feedback and engagement with submissions, copy editor Eve Krakow, and *LEARNing Landscapes* Editor Dr. Lynn Butler-Kisber, without whom this issue would not be possible.

BL & JR



Lynn Butler-Kisber (B.Ed., M.Ed., McGill; Ed.D. Harvard) is a Professor of Education in the Department of Integrated Studies, Faculty of Education, and an Associate Member of the Department of Equity, Ethics and Policy, School of Population and Global Health, Faculty of Medicine, McGill University. She was the recipient of the 2022 Faculty of Education, Distinguished Teaching award, is past Chair (2021–23) of the Elliot Eisner Special Interest Group at the American Educational Research Association, and the McGill representative (2021–25) on the Advisory Board for English Education to the Ministry of Education of Quebec. Her teaching and research include qualitative research methodologies; leadership; multiliteracies; and professional development. She is particularly interested in arts-based methodologies, more specifically in visual inquiry (collage, photo/film, and visual narratives) and poetic inquiry on which she has written and presented extensively. She focuses on issues of marginalization, equity, and social justice. She is currently working on an edited book for Brill with Janet Richards (University of Southern Florida) and Ron Chenail (Nova Southeastern University) on constructivist collaborative strategies for teaching and learning qualitative research. Her most recent book (2023) is *Narrative inquiry of displacement: Stories of challenge, change, and resilience* (Routledge) with Kelly Clark/Keefe (University of Vermont) and Maggi Savin-Baden (University of Worcester, UK). She is founding (2007) and continuing Editor of *LEARNing Landscapes*, an online, open access, peer-reviewed journal that integrates theory and practice, encourages multimodal submissions and the inclusion of a variety of voices. Current projects include the NEXTschool Initiative and the Climigrant (climate migration) Project. She has done a range of international research and development projects in Dominican Republic, China, Indonesia, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, and in the UK and USA.



Bronwen Low (PhD) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education at McGill. As a community-based researcher and collaborator (including as a board member for the Montreal-based non-profit Avenues), her work supports young people underserved and harmed by traditional schooling models and practices. She has expertise in multi-sectoral partnerships, as well as in community arts and wellbeing, popular poetics and hip-hop education, community music, and youth culture and literacy. Current studies include youth transitions from alternative schools, algorithmic imaginings on #BookTok, and speculative literacy in video game creation. She is working to start a new recording arts high school with Studio4MTL.



Jessica Ruglis (PhD, MPH, MAT) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology at McGill University, and an interdisciplinary, community-based participatory researcher, educator, artist, mother, and scholar advocate. Her academic, policy and teaching work focuses on the intersections of health, education, human development, (in)justice and equity: in particular, understanding education as a social determinant of health. She serves on the Board of Directors for Chalet Kent (2017–present), where scholarly efforts in recent years have centered on long-term community collaborations and partnerships for the development of two new community organizations to serve young adults, including the Uptown Institute.