Editorial

There is nothing new about the ideas that learners are unique and have different propensities for understanding and communicating (Gardner, 1983, 2000; Goldberger, Tarule, Clinchy, & Belenky, 1996). They construct their understanding from previous experiences (Bruner, 1960), personal beliefs and backgrounds (Berger, 1972), and learn best by doing (Dewey, 1916) in meaningful and culturally relevant, inquiry-oriented tasks (Aoki, 1993). Moreover, there is common agreement among educators, artists, and researchers, to name a few, that form mediates understanding (Eisner, 1991; McLuhan, 1964). This suggests that learners should have opportunities to receive information and communicate in a variety of mediums and modalities. There is no better time than now to experience multiple forms of communication and expression, given the current access to sophisticated technology. These basic tenets of knowing/understanding have been documented extensively and discussed and researched by educators for more than a century. Yet, educational practices are slow to catch up on how to integrate these perspectives in ways that will provide the optimal circumstances for engaging, meaningful, inclusive, and differentiated learning in all contexts. Now more than ever it has become imperative for acknowledging and scaffolding (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976) different ways of knowing if educators are to address the ethical, cultural, economic, and social needs of the 21st century. Time is running out as we prepare to enter its third decade.

The impetus for this issue, "Understanding Ways of Knowing: Insights and Illustrations," came from the need to address the important dimensions of learning outlined above. We hoped to give both researchers and practitioners the space in which to share innovations and illustrate different ways of constructing understanding. We were not disappointed. It is heartening to know that boundaries are being pushed in exciting ways in classroom practices at all levels of education, in research methodologies, in approaches to curriculum, in self-study/reflective work, and in professional development contexts. The contributions in this issue attest to this.

Invited Commentaries

We are delighted to include in this issue invited commentaries from Auckland, New Zealand; Sydney, Australia; California, United States; and Montreal, Canada. Each of these contributors add to the discussion about different and meaningful ways of developing understanding. The first of these is **Luke Sumich**, Head of Ormiston Junior College in Auckland. We had the occasion to hear him present about the College at the NEXTschool Initiative at the first NEXTschool Summer Institute in Montreal in 2018. NEXTschool is an initiative to transform secondary education in the English education system in Quebec. In this very interesting follow-up interview, Luke shares how he, with some other committed educators, worked for a year to create a personalized approach to education and then designed the space and curriculum in which to make it happen. They predicated their work on the belief that relationships are the key to student learning. Teachers at Ormiston are responsible for the same 12-14 students over four years and take on the roles of mentor, advisor, and coach for their groups. The curriculum is inquiry oriented, and the students do meaningful projects that integrate the community and involve collaborative

and constructive feedback from peers. The school maintains a designated focus on literacy and numeracy, which is evaluated by standardized tests, so that these data can be used in more traditional ways. Luke points out that the biggest hurdle was convincing parents, who now acknowledge, after almost three years, that their children are very engaged and happy. Ormiston is an example of what is possible in systems-oriented, secondary school change.

Katherine Boydell is a Professor of Mental Health at The Black Dog Institute at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. In her commentary, which she formatted as an interview, she recounts how she has incorporated different art forms in her research to make it accessible and understandable for wider audiences. As a former quantitative researcher, she struggled with the discrepancy between what participants shared with her about their isolation and loneliness and what the testing measurements indicated. She decided to pursue a degree in qualitative sociology to study lived experience with a view to social change. She describes how her work naturally led to arts-based and participatory approaches incorporating film, dance, and body mapping. She has shared the "results" in performances and exhibitions to extend the reach of the work, incorporate lived experiences in health and illness, and include the voices of marginalized communities. More recently, she and her colleagues have focused on gaps in the literature in arts-based research and through a funded project have identified ethical challenges which include issues concerning the ownership of the work, "truth," consent, emotional terrain, and aesthetics. There is no doubt that this current work will contribute to the arts-based research field in important ways and will help to make the case for an increased acceptance of arts-based research in academia.

Nick Sousanis is a comics author and an Assistant Professor of Humanities and Liberal Studies at San Francisco State University. His visual art comic form became renowned overnight when he completed "Unflattening" for his PhD dissertation at Teachers' College, Columbia University in 2014. It was published by Harvard University Press in 2015. In an engaging interview with him, Nick describes how his art form started when he was introduced to comics as a child. He loved drawing and produced his own comic books, but during his adolescence, he received discouraging messages about the worth of this career path. His talent was never far from the surface, however, and in college he found a receptivity to political comics and discovered the subversive aspects that this work engendered. He set his sights on a doctorate knowing that, "this is the kind of work I can make that can be educational, very sophisticated, complex, and dense, yet doesn't seem like it." When asked about how he navigated the hurdles of a comic form dissertation, he indicated that first, he was very determined and second, he enticed two senior professors to supervise him, both of whom were curious and unthreatened by taking risks. The rest was easy. He wanted to bridge the two worlds of art and academia to get feedback from artists and break new ground in academia. He emphasizes the importance of being well versed in the medium in order to have it accepted as research. Finally, he shares compellingly, how he has continued this work in academia, exploring new territory with colleagues by weaving together different art forms in workshop/performances. He ignites engagement and scaffolds students' work to push their boundaries of thinking and build their confidence in taking risks. In so doing, there is no doubt he is expanding the reach of this important work.

The last commentary is a submission by **Simon Parent**, a PhD student at the Université de Montréal working on the pedagogical uses of computer programming and robotics, and **Sara Iatauro**, a Robotics and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) consultant who works for the English Montreal School Board. She served as the local organizer for the 22nd International Robotics Conference held in Montreal in June 2018. The Conference attracted 4000 elementary, secondary, and higher education attendees from around the world who participated in robotic competitions and performances. This commentary describes with visuals the poignant journey of students from the Centre de formation en enterprise et recupération (CFER) Bellechasse in Saint-Raphael, Quebec. CFER Bellechasse is a learning centre for students, most of whom speak French, and many of whom have learning challenges. The Bellechasse team, ages 16-19, coached by dedicated teachers, were charged with building a robotic device and integrating it into what is called an OnStage competition, a robotic performance designed by the team. The team competed and reached the international finals, which gave them an entry to the Conference. In addition to having their skills recognized and the opportunity to participate in this important event, the team was enriched by meeting and interacting with colleagues worldwide and from many different cultures. They developed communication and collaborative skills, increased their independence, and were validated in the process. It is a testimony to what is possible when students are engaged meaningfully and are learning by doing.

The articles that follow the commentaries in this issue are arranged alphabetically by author, but for the purposes of this editorial, are discussed thematically.

Learning Through Natural, Everyday Experiences

Alexandra Fidyk, an Associate Professor at the University of Alberta, posits the connections between childhood experiences of play, place, and tradition, and an outgrowth of adult creativity, experimentation, and psychological stability. In a narrative reflection interspersed with photographs, she takes the reader through her memories of her childhood on a farm in Saskatchewan and the household and farm tasks required of her and her siblings. As well, there were many opportunities for freedom of play. She believes these experiences taught her about responsibility and collaboration and fostered in her curiosity and creativity. She argues that the elements of this childhood lifestyle might just be a remedy for what she calls a “trauma epidemic” in our current society. **Keely D. Cline, Merlene Gilb,** and **Michelle Vaught** from Northwest Missouri State University and Saint Louis University share their participatory narrative inquiry about Vaught, a Kindergarten teacher at a local laboratory school. They use the current literature to support the importance of grounding learning in the natural play and everyday experiences, or “rich normality,” of young children, rather than emphasizing a more traditional, primary curriculum. More concretely, they discuss how the passing of the children’s beloved groundhog, a sad, but real-life moment for all, inspired Vaught to use this event to deal with their grief and what came out of it. The experience led a class research trip to the university science department to help make a choice and facilitate the planning for and subsequent naming of the new classroom pet, a gecko. This example shows how using the everyday and following the interests of the children without predetermined outcomes, fosters curiosity, builds relationships, and transforms learning.

Learning by Doing and Through Artful Approaches in Higher Education

It is much more prevalent to hear about interesting and successful learning by doing in Kindergarten and elementary school classrooms. These contexts seem to lend themselves more easily to inquiry-oriented and arts-based approaches because of the ways time, space, and human resources are allocated. There is more room for curricular flexibility, subject area integration, and building relationships, and the educational stakes are lower. There are examples of meaningful and exciting learning in high schools, colleges, and universities, but the occurrences seem to dwindle exponentially by the time one reaches university. There are probably many reasons for this. The disciplines are more rigidly segregated, teaching is allocated by subject expertise, timetabling is perceived as inflexible, the educational stakes become increasingly higher, and there is the feeling that older students do not "need" this kind of learning. We are fortunate to have received submissions which show how learning in higher education might be transformed. **Nancy Pauly, Karla V. Kingsley,** and **Asha Baker** from the University of New Mexico share how they engaged a cohort of preservice teachers in the preparation and implementation of arts-integrated units with emergent bilingual students. The units were based on culturally relevant children's literature which were transformed into plays. The authors discuss how the narratives of three preservice teachers and how they each learned one can teach powerfully through art when it is integrated into the curriculum and not treated as an "add on." As a result of their work, the preservice teachers realized the propensity of the arts to engage and support culturally diverse identities and meaningful learning among their students. Also, in their own "learning by doing," they experienced firsthand how to integrate multimodal and artful approaches into their teaching and the profound results that these can have. **Kristin M. Murphy** from the University of Massachusetts Boston grouped students in a qualitative methods course with high school students to engage in a Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) project using photovoice, a process which employs photos and critical discussion to examine issues from a participant perspective to inform social action. The university students were prepared for the work by engaging with mixed reality simulations (MRS) using eighth-grade student avatars as participants, coupled with photos they had taken to conduct an analysis with their peers. These simulations helped to acquire some facility with qualitative methodology before they began the YPAR project. The benefit of the MRS was that the process could be paused remotely by the instructor when assistance was needed. The benefit of practicing photovoice with their peers illustrated to the students nuances about research they would not have gleaned from reading a text or hearing a lecture. Murphy concludes that the active and multimodality exercises produced confidence among these novice researchers and powerful learning opportunities. In another study using photovoice, **İnci Yilmazli Trout, Beatrix Perez,** and **M. Candace Christensen,** from the University of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio College, and the University of Texas at San Antonio, respectively, show how one professor changed a traditionally delivered Master of Social Work course on community practice into one where the students in three different classes were assigned to conduct and evaluate photovoice projects with undergraduates on "transforming campus rape culture." Their results indicated that a photovoice project is well suited to teach community practice in social work. More specifically, the social work students understood more fully the role of a social worker in macro-level practice. The participation with undergraduates in the photovoice process allowed these graduate students to appreciate the importance of hearing the perspectives of participants about a topic

and of engaging in critical thinking with them. **Mark Silverberg,** from Cape Breton University and Ryerson University, shares, in a compelling case study of a Chinese nursing student, Wei Wan, how creative writing and writing workshops can be helpful pedagogical tools for an ESL student. Three approaches that he used in the course, which are known to English teachers and students, but not necessarily to students in other disciplines are, first, automatic writing, stemming from automatism in Surrealism, which involves writing continuously for a designated time without permitting the hand to stop. This eliminates barriers that arise from overthinking and attending too closely to rules which inhibit the flow of writing. The second is encouraging writing about personal experience, which is often denounced in other disciplines. This validates experience and provides space for personal voice. Third, his students participated in peer workshops where peers write, share, and discuss their work in a supportive, small group setting. This provides social and supportive elements to what is usually a solitary task. Overall, Wei describes the "relief" she found in having time and space to explore the personal and emotional areas of her experiences, which would not have been encouraged in a more traditional course context. **Amber Moore** is a PhD candidate at the University of British Columbia. Inspired by the work of Carl Leggo, who suggested poetry can be used to foster well-being among preservice teachers, she makes a case for using poetry to explore graduate student anxiety, which has recently been on the rise. Moore uses the poetic form known as abecedarian, or alphabetic sequencing, to create a series of poetic experiences directed at graduate faculty members. She adeptly weaves in poignancy, humour, and seriousness in ways that will make instructors, supervisors, and graduate students stop and take stock.

Exploring Different Ways of Knowing in School Settings

Authors in this issue have shared some wonderful examples of exploring different ways of knowing with students in various school settings. They provide nuggets about teaching and learning that could be transferred quite easily to other contexts. I could not help but contemplate as I read this work, how, during 12 years of editing *LEARNing Landscapes*, there has been a plethora of examples sharing innovative classroom practices. This history exemplifies just how many interesting things are going on in pockets of schools at many levels and in many places. The thought that remains, however, which might be contemplated during the reading of these pieces, is how innovation can be translated into practices school wide. **Matthew Yanko,** a doctoral candidate from the University of British Columbia, discusses his study of how a split grade one/two classroom was transformed into a "music atelier" inspired by the philosophy of the Reggio Emilia early childhood centres started in Italy in 1963 by founder Loris Malaguzzi. The basic tenets of Reggio Emilia are to develop, in young students, multiple ways of thinking, communicating, loving, and understanding. He shares in three vignettes how the children created musical soundscapes about local landmarks during which time they were inherently negotiating identity. Also, these "stories" show how the discourse unfolded between the classroom and music teacher as the atelier was progressing, illustrating the ownership the children were exhibiting for their work. Finally, they depict how the children were able to reflect and think metacognitively about their work when the project was over. **Sophia Xiang** is an MEd student at the University of British Columbia and a grade five/six French Immersion teacher. She illustrates how music, poetry, and visual arts enhance learner identity. She uses the musical metaphor of "Klangfarbenmelodie" as the frame in which to share her

work. Klang means tone for the music, farben means colour for the visual arts, and melodie means melody for the poetry. She argues that her teaching practice represents the cultural and linguistic hyphenation that is present in her students, which like Klangfarbenmelodie, honours "the space in between." She shares how she focuses on the process (not the product) of art making in the multimodalities described above, to help students move past the spaces of cultural and linguistic discomfort, and to take risks in the creative process. In so doing, they enhanced their thinking and celebrated their identity. **Grace D. Player** is a Professor of Education at the University of Connecticut. Her study shares how playwriting became an avenue for three, middle-school Black girls to critique their experiences of schooling. It focuses on an after-school club called "The Unnormal Sisterhood," where they wrote, read, talked, danced, and created together and through which the author rotated. Using the modalities of playwriting and performance, the girls were able to explore "their knowledge and ways of knowing rooted in their cultural, gendered, and racialized experiences and to share these with others in an academic setting." Player argues, and illustrates with scripts, that playwriting provided cultural sustainability for the girls and allowed them to critique publicly the inequities and harassment they encountered in school. The multimodalities the girls used to explore topics that were particularly meaningful to them provide a lens into how these pedagogies might be translated into literacy classrooms to deal with intersecting structural oppressions that Black, and other girls, face. **Becky Beucher**, an Assistant Professor, and **Robyn Seglem,** an Associate Professor, are both from Illinois State University. Their study followed three Black male, secondary school students in their process of producing digital media projects which combined pictures, words, and music to create narratives about their lives. Discussions among the students themselves, with a researcher and with peers, were audio recorded and analyzed using critical discourse analysis. Based on the results of the research, which are shared in interesting textual excerpts and visuals prepared by each participant, Beucher and Seglem argue strongly for a multiliteracy, multimodal approach to literacy teaching in order to explore meaningful, personal, and cultural experiences, honour voice, and provide the opportunity to share these stories with others. They caution, however, that the sharing of personal narratives creates a vulnerability for the creator, and they question the value of grading this kind of work as it can shut down the willingness of students to participate in what can be a very rich and rewarding process.

Understanding Practice Through Artful and Multimodal Self-Study

The fact that forms mediate understanding in different ways (Eisner, 1991) creates a strong rationale for incorporating multimodal approaches into teaching and learning. This expands the possibilities and perspectives of understanding and uncovers insights about phenomena, practices, and experiences that might not surface otherwise. This rationalizes the need for researchers to incorporate different kinds of arts-based/multimodal approaches into their work to get deeper understanding and to offer greater accessibility of the research to a wide range of audiences. Three of the contributions to this issue do just that in interesting self-studies. Self-study, frequently called autoethnography, is "an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience" (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011, p. 1). **Kelly Hanson** is a doctoral candidate at the University of British Columbia and a classroom teacher. In her self-study, she describes in detail the

approaches she used to integrate British Columbia's redesigned school curriculum into her teaching practices. This recent curriculum is predicated on the nine principles of The First Peoples' Principles of Learning (FPPL), which include "attending holistically to the unique mind, body, spirit, community and land relations that are integral to how students read and interpret the world." She situates herself as coming from a Euro-American settler world view and writes about how she challenged herself by juxtaposing her dominant approach to learning alongside the nine principles outlined above. She interrogated the settler narratives so prevalent in classroom literature. She searched for Indigenous Canadian literature to disrupt these narratives and honour Indigenous identities. She collaborated and interacted with others in workshops and community events while keeping on hand a list of questions to ask herself daily about her practices. In the process of this very reflective work, she concluded that FPPL is foundational to the "new" curriculum and provides a way of "giving closer attention to learning from identity, land and story." **Casey Burkholder** is an Assistant Professor at the University of New Brunswick and **Ashley Frawley** is an MEd Candidate there. They conducted self-studies on their teaching as White teachers in Hong Kong and Northern Alberta, respectively, to help identify and "disrupt problematic diversity narratives from their classrooms." They used memory work as the methodology to revisit, write about, and share their experiences to enhance their understanding of their current roles as teachers and activists. They juxtaposed and discussed these teaching experiences and then complemented this with the production of a collaborative cellphilm (cell phone and video production) to create a visual narrative. Using a visual methodology to analyze the cellphilm, they show in some detail how these visual narratives unfolded. This transparent process adds to the persuasiveness of their work and will be of help to other researchers. They argue that the multimodal approach they used enhanced their depth of critical understanding, which they intend to incorporate into future teaching and research to help disrupt White settler perspectives and privilege. **Karen McGarry** is a visual artist/educator and PhD student at the University of Cincinnati. She employs reflexivity as a process of self-study in which she explores the use of text and visual art to examine the *what* and *how* of her knowing. She shares how this intertwined inquiry process starts with an idea from something she has read or seen, which she then transforms into a visual form and grounds this in a discussion of qualitative methodology. Her textual exploration and accompanying visuals traverse A/r/tography, bricolage, and phenomenology, providing multiple pathways for generating connections and new understandings. In her own words, her arts-based reflections and images are her attempt to make tangible her "process for imagining what research and a researcher might look like…" It is a process for understanding and eventual becoming. **Aaron Zimmerman** and **Linnie Greenlees** are Assistant Professors from Texas Tech University, **Elizabeth Isidro** is an Assistant Professor at Western Michigan University, and **Stacey Sneed** is a PhD student at Texas Tech University. They use the method of connoisseurship developed by Elliot Eisner (1991) to explore the aesthetic or affective aspects of their teaching which are so often omitted in research. They use three compelling poems to do this. Three messages emerged, which they argue are heightened in intensity because of the poetry. First, teachers should seize meaningful moments that arise in teaching and explore these, rather than surrendering to the mandated curriculum. Second, teachers should not make assumptions about students' abilities. Instead, they should build trust and supportive

relationships with their students. Finally, since there is always uncertainty in teaching, teachers should embrace this aspect of their work and be open to "the magic of meaningful moments."

Exploring Ways of Knowing in Professional Learning

Continuous professional learning for educators is touted as imperative and yet, it is difficult to mandate, make engaging and successful. The articles presented here share a range of ways that have worked for a variety of educators. **Beverlie Dietze** is the Director of Learning and Applied Research at Okanagan College, in Kelowna, BC, and **Diane Kashin** is a Professor at Algonquin College in Ottawa. Partially funded by the Lawson Foundation, their research project uses a heuristic form of narrative inquiry to examine the perceptions of novice, early childhood educators about outdoor education professional learning experiences directed at young children. They build on previous research that outdoor play is important physically and cognitively for children and yet, children are experiencing fewer opportunities for outdoor play. The professional learning was structured as a series of multimodal modules in an asynchronous delivery approach. Their results showed that teachers' experiences, values, knowledge, and attitudes all have a bearing on the quality of children's outdoor play. The participants highlighted the need to provide families with information on the importance of outdoor play and on how parents can encourage play in all kinds of weather. The authors conclude that professional learning for early learning teachers builds confidence, awareness, and programming possibilities, and helps them to fully embrace outdoor play. **Christie Schultz** is the Assistant Dean of the Faculty of Extension at the University of Alberta and a PhD student. She shares a narrative inquiry of her professional learning experience at Alberta's Building Peaceful Communities Summer Institute which she attended in 2018 over a two-week period. When she joined the group, she had no idea what it meant to create a "curriculum of community." As she wrote, shared stories with her colleagues, which were in part about her dying mother-in-law, listened to theirs, read and wrote some more, she began to understand that curriculum making is a lived curriculum (Aoki, 1993). It comes from personal experiences, from realms that are usually instilled as separate and not to be disclosed. She came to realize that a personal and unjudging, safe space builds relationships, precipitates kind gestures, and creates community. The result is a curriculum co-composed collaboratively with others which moves beyond prescription. In this type of space, boundaries of the personal and classroom become blurred; the two worlds are bridged. Schultz concludes, quoting Huber, Murphy, and Clandinin (2003), that curriculum is "intimately connected with the life stories of each persona and the intermingling of storied lives in the life space of the classroom" (pp. 347–348). **Sandra Jack-Malik** is an Assistant Professor at Cape Breton University. Overwhelmed by the tenure process that she was undergoing and on the brink of resigning, she decided to attend The Currere Exchange, Third Annual Retreat and Conference in 2018. The conference was designed for educators interested in curriculum and cultural studies and in "refreshing" their scholarly agendas. She shares how she was inspired by the conference and used the process of currere (Pinar, 1975) (which explores relations among academic experiences, life history, and social reconstructions) in an autobiographical journey of writing, poetry, and photographs about her life leading up to tenure and the futures ahead. The steps include: "Regressive," where one looks back on past experiences; "Progressive," where one entertains future; "Analytic," where one focuses on the present; "Synthetical," where the

threads which have emerged in the first three steps are woven together. This compelling piece will resonate strongly with other academics who have experienced or are anticipating tenure review. The process allowed her to highlight who she really is, what she knows and values, and what her future should be, which happily is to continue as a professor.

LBK

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