



Well-Being and Well-Becoming in Schools Initiative

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2023-24 Lecture Series on *Well-Being and Well-Becoming in Schools*

This series of seven lectures will provide audience members with opportunities to engage with research and practices on selected topics concerned with well-being in schools.

FALL 2023

Lecture 1

Time: Monday, 25th September 2023, 4:30-5:30 pm

Place: In-person: Room 200 Education Building, University of Manitoba
On-line: via Zoom (see registration information above)

Title: Physical education teachers' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic: Conceptualizing outdoors as a resource for school wellbeing

Presenters: Jordan Laidlaw & jay a johnson (University of Manitoba)

Jordan Laidlaw is a teacher, union activist, and Ph.D. candidate in educational administration at the University of Manitoba. Involved in the labour movement, he serves on the Executive of his Local teachers' association, having served as Chair for the Wellness Committee. He has facilitated professional development sessions across Manitoba, has presented at local and national conferences, and has various professional and peer-reviewed publications. For his initiatives, he has been featured on CTV News, the front page of the Winnipeg Free Press, and nationally on CBC As It Happens with Carol Off. Jordan's research focuses on the intersections of educational labour and school wellbeing.

jay johnson is currently a full professor in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management at the University of Manitoba and was formerly a middle and high school teacher. He engages in critical sport, leisure, recreation and education studies. His current research includes exploring the impact(s) of climatic change on our physical experiences; how physical educators incorporate land-based learning and teaching on the land into their teaching during the pandemic and the impact on well-being and curriculum; and how Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth experience the built environment and outdoor adventure/land-based education. He has co-edited the book *Making the Team: Inside the World of Sport Initiations and Hazing*.

Synopsis: The COVID19 pandemic had a profound impact on school systems across Canada as staff and students were mandated to adhere to various protocols. Physical education teachers were particularly affected as many were displaced from their gymnasiums and were required to teach outdoors. While navigating pandemic-related health protocols led to increased job demands and subsequent stressors, outdoor learning spaces became a relief from such regulations. Through a job demands-resource theoretical framework, outdoors is conceptualized as a job resource for teachers to draw upon to improve school wellbeing. Findings were generated through semi-structured interviews, exploring teachers' experiences across Manitoba.

Lecture 2

Time: **Monday, 23rd October 2023, 4:30-5:30 pm**

Place: In-person: Room 200 Education Building, University of Manitoba
On-line: via Zoom (see registration information)

Title: Children's well-being, autonomy, and paternalism in schools: Are we justified in paternalizing children?

Presenter: Heather Krepski (University of Winnipeg)

Heather Krepski is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Winnipeg. Her research focuses on children's well-being/becoming, educational equity, ethics in education, children's autonomy rights, and assessment. In her work on the distribution of the goods and opportunities for well-being in schools, Krepski argues that students are entitled to greater participation rights in the decisions about their own well-being. Heather has been a teacher and curriculum leader in the Toronto District School Board and has worked as an Instructor at Toronto Metropolitan University in the Learning Success Centre.

Synopsis: This presentation will address the importance of children's autonomy in schools, particularly as it relates to the promotion of well-being in K-12 school education. If we view student well-being as a core purpose for K-12 education, we require an updated approach that moves beyond the traditional aims of strengthening our national identity, economic competitiveness, and social cohesion. I argue here that student autonomy is a necessary condition for well-being and that children's capacities for autonomy are as broad and important as adult capacities. New understandings about the purpose of school education and what it means to be a child yield important implications for adult entitlements to paternalize children in schools. Suggestions and pathways forward given these considerations will be taken up through a discussion-based format.

Lecture 3

Time: **27th November 2023, 4:30-5:30 pm**

Place: In-person: Room 200 Education Building, University of Manitoba
On-line: via Zoom (see registration information)

Title: Loneliness and Belonging in Canadian Schools: A Research Synthesis

Presenters: Thomas Falkenberg & Rebeca Heringer (University of Manitoba)

Thomas Falkenberg is Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. His current research program revolves around the notion that school education should be primarily about well-being and well-becoming and the role that contemplative practices and holistic education can play in enacting this notion. He is the editor of the book *Well-Being and Well-Becoming in Schools*, which will be published by the University of Toronto Press in March 2024.

Rebeca Heringer, PhD, is a Sessional Instructor at the University of Manitoba. Her main academic teaching and research expertise revolves around (forced) migrations and subsequent exclusions, oppressions, and inequities in education; anti-racism and inclusive education; education as/for/through well-being; philosophical foundations of education; and research ethics/anti-oppressive research methodologies.

Synopsis: Despite an ever-increasing number of opportunities for social connections, locally and globally, and an increasing social concentration through urbanization, citizens in countries of the Global North are more and more “lonely in a social world.” The situation is no different for the approximately 5.5 million school-age children in Canada. One in four children in Canada feel lonely, which is often associated with negative peer relations and social anxiety. Conversely, a sense of belonging may be considered a basic human need and has been acknowledged as fundamental to people’s overall well-being. For students, a sense of belonging in schools is associated with better academic outcomes, school attendance, and educational engagement. The purpose of this presentation is to share the findings of a research synthesis study on understanding loneliness and belonging in Canadian schools.

WINTER 2024

Lecture 4

Time: **Thursday, 25th January 2024, 4:30-5:30 pm**

Place: In-person: Room 200 Education Building, University of Manitoba
On-line: via Zoom (see registration information)

Title: Beyond Programs: A Case for a Systemic Approach to Well-Being in Manitoba

Presenter: Roza Gray (University of Manitoba)

Roza Gray recently retired from her position as Superintendent/CEO in Evergreen School Division after more than 20 years as Superintendent so she can pursue a doctorate in education focused on well-being. She is passionate about research in psychology and social science which can be used to improve outcomes for students and staff. Her particular interest is in building system capacity so that leaders can move beyond one-off programs and professional development towards an integration of mental health and well-being as a core component of public education.

Synopsis: We are aware that Manitoba’s children and youth are struggling with mental health problems at an unprecedented rate. We are also aware that current approaches to mental health and well-being are insufficient to meet the need, and that bold and collective efforts are required to shift our K-12 education system into one with effective solutions for the long term. This presentation will provide an overview of our current context in

Manitoba, review some of the research and practice on addressing mental health and well-being in K-12 education, and provide some recommendations for building the integrated, responsive and sustainable systems our children need to flourish and live “the good life.”

Lecture 5

Time: **Thursday, 29th February 2024, 4:30-5:30 pm**

Place: In-person: Room 200 Education Building, University of Manitoba
On-line: via Zoom (see registration information)

Title: The Challenge of Well-Being in School Organizations

Presenter: Leslie Eblie Trudel (University of Winnipeg)

Lesley Eblie Trudel, PhD, has been successfully involved in public education in Manitoba Canada for over thirty years. She has held positions ranging from instructional to administrative, working with diverse populations in both urban and rural settings. Prior to her present role, Lesley was an Assistant Superintendent of Schools. In January 2019, Lesley joined the Faculty of Education at the University of Winnipeg. In February 2021, she accepted the position of Associate Dean in the faculty. Lesley is a collaborative leader with a keen interest in organizational learning and systemic change, as it pertains to diverse and inclusive educational communities.

Synopsis: Concerns around student well-being continue to be at the forefront of educational dialogue in Canadian schools. While global competencies, conventions and human rights frameworks prioritize this topic, provincial school systems have yet to fully embrace this concept and embed well-being within student assessment practices. This session explores the critical aspects of organizational and educational leadership required to address well-being in schools today, to ensure that all members of the community have opportunities to flourish.

Lecture 6

Time: **Thursday, 28th March 2024, 4:30-5:30 pm**

Place: In-person: Room 200 Education Building, University of Manitoba
On-line: via Zoom (see registration information)

Title: *What High School Students Want to Learn About and How: The Importance of Well-Being*

Presenters: Michele Catalano (University of Manitoba), Omera Esslemont, & Jasleen Kaur

Michele Catalano is an instructor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba, a former high school teacher with 33 years experience, and a practicing marriage and family therapist. Her teaching focus includes counselling skills, ethics in counselling, and school counselling at all levels. Michele’s private practice focuses on the well-being and mental health of individuals, couples, and families especially in the areas of grief and loss, life transitions, and relational challenges.

Omera Esslemont and Jasleen Kaur are former high school students of Michele Catalano's.

Synopsis: What do Manitoba high school students want to learn? If high school students had a voice in curriculum development, what would *they* suggest is important for them to learn about at this important developmental stage of their life? This presentation addresses these questions by drawing on the presenter's experience with students from a Winnipeg high school who have provided responses to these questions through their voices and the course choices they made. What mattered to these students were not particular curricular learning outcomes, but rather opportunities to engage in and with issues that deeply mattered to their well-being. The presentation will discuss curricular and pedagogical implications for school education that wants to focus on what deeply matters to many high school students.

Lecture 7

Time: **Thursday, 25th April 2024, 4:30-5:30 pm**

Place: In-person: Room 200 Education Building, University of Manitoba
On-line: via Zoom (see registration information)

Title: Nature-based Teaching for Child Well-Being: Examples from Teachers

Presenter: Michael Link (University of Winnipeg)

Michael Link is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Winnipeg. His research explores nature-based approaches that support student well-being and the transition to a just and sustainable future. Prior to his 17 years as a teacher educator, Mike taught for 13 years in elementary schools in Abbotsford and Surrey, British Columbia.

Synopsis: How might educators design curriculum with well-being as a central focus? This presentation draws from three examples through the lens of Falkenberg's Well-being and Well-becoming Framework. We begin by looking at an arts-based project involving water conservation (grade 9). The second example is drawn from my study of a Reggio Emilia-inspired approach (K-3), and the third from an ongoing co-investigation of a forest school approach (Pre-K). There will be opportunities for educators to reflect on elements of their teaching that support student well-being and to consider how they may design student experiences for well-being in their practice.