



Undergraduate Research Award Opportunities:  
Researchers' Projects  
2023

**Dr. Merli Tamtik, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education**

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**Project: Leading Schools in Times of Crisis**

This URGP-funded project focuses on changes in school leadership during COVID-19 pandemic. Informed by the crisis leadership literature (Harris, 2020; Netolicky, 2020; Pollock, 2020) and institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Oliver, 1991), this project aims to examine how different environmental pressures may have led to different leadership adaptations of school administrators. We are seeking to work with a highly motivated student who is willing to work independently by taking an active lead in this research project. Tasks performed during URA period involve, but are not limited to, conducting literature review, summarizing interview transcripts, analyzing qualitative data through coding and writing drafts on the findings. This position requires commitment of 10 hours per week and can be done remotely with regular Zoom meetings with the project lead.

**Dr. Lauren Goegan, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education**

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**Project: Social Integration of Students with LD at Postsecondary Institutions**

My research focuses on the transition to postsecondary education for students with Learning Disabilities (LD). In this project, we are going to examine a key component to a successful transition, that is, the development of friendships and a sense of belonging. This project is done in partnership with the Learning Disabilities Association of Manitoba (LDAM) and an evidence-based program from the Friends Resilience Hub to support the social integration of students with LD transitioning to postsecondary education. The student will contribute to the project by conducting a literature search, creating survey items, building a survey online, and making a research brief for research mobilization. The student is expected to have skills in literature searches and writing.

**Dr. Jennifer Watt, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education**

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**Project 1: Acknowledging and Addressing Gender-based Sexual Violence in Schools**

This research project focuses on exploring how gender-based sexual violence affects students' experiences of K-12 schooling, especially considering how experiences may be different for students who live within the intersection of various forms of oppression and privilege. Using Manitoba as a case

study, this project will identify promising curriculum, policies, practices, and community resources that can contribute to supporting student survivors and teaching students about sexual consent, gender equity, and healthy relationships. I look forward to working with a URA student who will contribute to the literature search, curriculum explorations, and/or community resources synthesis. The URA will also be invited to engage in their own inquiry and/or action-based project within this topic that connects to developing capacity of teacher education students in addressing gender-based sexual violence in schools.

## **Project 2: Decolonizing and Arts-based Responses to the Missing and Murdered Indigenous**

Women and Girls (MMIWG) Report in Higher Education

This research project will contribute to a larger, interdisciplinary, collaborative project between Faculties of Education and Nursing in sites across Manitoba and British Columbia. The project explores anti-racist, arts-based approaches to support emerging health and education professionals as they engage with and respond to the Calls to Justice from the MMIWG report (2019). The research team, which is comprised of both Indigenous people and settlers, believe that the arts can provide alternative modes to disrupt, learn, and heal. The URA student involved in this project will be invited to contribute to an arts-based case study at the University of Manitoba site. The URA student will also be invited to engage in their own anti-racist, arts-based inquiry in response to the recommendations for education with the MMIWG report. Indigenous students are especially encouraged to apply for this opportunity.

**Dr. Peng Liu, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education**

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## **Project 1: System Improvement in a Decentralized Education System: A Case from Manitoba, Canada**

Manitoba, one of the provinces of Canada, is now experiencing an unprecedented system reform for the purpose of improving system effectiveness. Lower literacy and numeracy scores compared with other provinces in Canada have characterized this decentralized education system in recent years. Bill 64 has been proposed as a new system improvement strategy to enhance system effectiveness in Manitoba. This study is aimed to explore the strategies and challenges in improving education system in Manitoba. URA is expected to have the skills in literature search and writing.

## **Project 2: Understanding Turnaround School Research in Canada**

Turnaround schools are existed in the North America context. They refer to the schools which have received the interference from the government in order to improve the performance of the schools. "Turnaround" is a measure to transform the low-performing schools.

This proposed project aimed to understand the causes of low performing schools in Canada, while making efforts in knowing the values and approaches to improve low performing schools in Canada from governance and school management perspective. URA is expected to have the good skills in literature search and academic writing.

## **Project 3: Comparison of strategies in facilitating the development of student leadership in Canada and China: a teacher's perspective (Second stage)**

This study will examine Canadian and Chinese teachers' unique perspectives on student leadership in order to explore commonalities and differences in effective ways to develop student leadership both in Canada and China. It is helpful to hear the voices of Canadian and Chinese teachers to help cultivate

more future student leaders. Interviews will be conducted by the Principal Investigator and research assistant as the major research tool to collect data. Students will get chance to learn how to conduct research and literature review.

#### **Project 4: Understanding roles and effects of literacy coach in Canadian Education**

Although literacy coaching is gradually becoming an important mean to improve student learning in Canadian context, but the research about their roles and effects are obviously insufficient in literature (Dole & Donaldson, 2006; Lynch & Ferguson, 2010). These lead this research to focus on understanding the roles and effects of literacy coaches in Canadian Education. Students will get chance to learn how to conduct research and literature review.

**Dr. Melanie Janzen, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education**

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#### **Project 1: An Examination of the Constructs of Children and Teaching Over Time**

In this project, the student will be trained and supported in conducting an analysis of the Journal of Childhood Studies, a journal of the Canadian Association for Young Children (CAYC). The journal, which dates back to 1974, is a peer reviewed, open access digital journal that aims to provide researchers and practitioners with a transdisciplinary space to cultivate experimental, creative, and alternative approaches to, and conceptualizations of, childhood. The research analysis will illustrate the ways in which conceptions of children have changed over time with the aim of producing a co-authored publication.

#### **Project 2: The Neoliberal Creep in Education: Dismantling Discourses of Inequity**

Neoliberal reforms in education—those focused on the commercialization, marketization and standardization—have been sweeping around the globe and across Canada. This research aims to systematically trace the effects of neoliberal policy on the lived experiences of teachers and students with the aim of articulating how these policies magnify inequities for students—particularly those already marginalized. The project will involve collecting, sorting and conducting preliminary analyses of public policy and policy documents as well as media artefacts related to public education reform efforts. The student will be trained in document analysis and will have the opportunity to co-author a publication.

**Dr. Ee-Seul Yoon, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education**

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#### **Project: School Segregation in Canada**

While one of the major goals of a public education system is to bring together students from different social, cultural, economic, and racial backgrounds, there is little research that shows the patterns of social segregation at the school level in Canada. The purpose of this project is to describe and analyze the patterns of school segregation in K-12 Canadian schools. The project will use data from the Programme for International Student Assessment. The findings will illuminate the current state of school segregation and thus what policy makers need to consider to address any potential challenges related to school-level segregation. The student will be expected to complete following tasks: (1) literature search and review; (2) preliminary data analysis using Excel; (3) depending on the student's research skills, they may also be asked to conduct further statistical analysis using SPSS, SAS, or other software.