Editorial

The contributions before you arose from the inaugural Atlantic Education Graduate Student Conference, held at the University of New Brunswick on 7 July 2012. The aim of the conference took the form of three questions. What theoretical/practical problems motivate graduate research in education today? What, if any, additional problems arise with regard to methodology? What sort of solutions might educational problems entail? All three questions were united in the hope that the conference would highlight present directions in graduate research and thereby foster connections and discussions among burgeoning scholars in educational studies.

The questions were open by design, in order to attract graduate students from across the diverse field of educational studies. As anyone in academia knows, however, big open questions can be as daunting as they are motivational. Dr. Ellen Rose’s keynote address, “Research as Wondering and Wandering: the Role of Serendipity in Education Research,” puts this sometimes perplexing experience into context. Woe betide the aspiring academic today who forgets that “education and knowledge are increasingly commodified, [and] systematicity is heightened by a hyper-attention to performance indicators and the measuring and monitoring of research by funding agencies” (p. 1). On this point, my own mind cannot help but wander to the words of Shakespeare in King Lear:

When we our betters see bearing our woes,  
We scarcely think our miseries our foes.  
Who alone suffers suffers most i’ the mind,  
Leaving free things and happy shows behind:  
But then the mind much sufferers doth o’er skip,  
When grief hath mates, and bearing fellowship.¹
The fellowship that Dr. Rose offers speaks to the transformative power of knowledge, of what can happen when wondering and wandering meet. In her words, this power is “an important aspect of research that, in our emphasis on method and system, validity and reliability, we tend to neglect and even deny: serendipity” (p. 2).

Dare I say it – *serendipitously*, the graduate papers published herein have this aspect of otherwise distinct research in common. Katherine Ireland draws on her teaching experience and competing cognition and learning theories to make the case for “strong history support in the K-2 grades” (p. 10). Karla Culligan revisits Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory of mind in order to reconsider second language learning “as a complex, integrated phenomenon” (p. 13). Based on a literature review, Mehrdad Shahidi deduces an increase in the “probability of linear patterns of loneliness” when studies focus only on one dimension of loneliness, which he demonstrates “is not well-adapted to the growth model of development” (p. 1). Soudeh Oladi explores the connection between corporate funding in education and education’s instrumentalization, “the logic that knowledge is most useful when it is used as a means” (p. 3).

As editors, Dr. Emery Hyslop-Margison, Matthew Rogers, and I would like to thank the authors and the reviewers for making the first peer-reviewed publication of AJGSE possible.

Hugh Leonard, AJGSE co-editor

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1 The *King Lear* lines are quoted from: [http://shakespeare.mit.edu/lear/lear.3.6.html](http://shakespeare.mit.edu/lear/lear.3.6.html)