

Presenters Bios: IURN Symposium

Friday, May 26, 2023

Melina Kennedy (Keynote Address) grew up in East Preston, an African Nova Scotian community. Throughout her youth, she actively participated in various community groups, such as Girl Guides, Baptist Youth Fellowship, Boys and Girls Club of Preston, and played for the East Preston Pacers Basketball Organization. After successfully completing High School, Melina pursued her education and earned a Bachelor of Science degree with a double major in Mathematics and Statistics, along with a Certificate in Actuarial and Financial Mathematics from the University of King's College through Dalhousie University. She furthered her studies at St. Francis Xavier University, where she obtained a Bachelor of Education degree, focusing on Mathematics, Science, and French Immersion. As a teacher, Melina passionately taught Mathematics, Science, Health, English, Social Studies, and Core French at the Junior High levels in both English and French Immersion Programs. While teaching, she expanded her knowledge by earning a Master of Education in Lifelong Learning, specializing in Africentric Policy and Research, and achieving the valedictorian honor in her graduating class. Throughout her teaching career, Melina actively coached volleyball, basketball, and track and field. Building on her classroom success, she transitioned into the role of Mathematics Intervention Teacher in schools within the former Halifax Regional School Board. After completing the Leadership Program (currently known as the Aspiring School Administration Program), she advanced to the position of Vice Principal. She then became a Mathematics Specialist and later assumed the role of Provincial Mathematics Lead for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Currently, Melina serves as the Director of African Canadian Services for the province of Nova Scotia. Melina attributes her achievements to her rich familial background, her strong sense of community, and the unwavering support of her husband and daughter. To contribute to her community, she actively served as a member of the Black Educators Association Executive. Currently, she holds the position of President on the Board of Directors for the Boys & Girls Club of Preston, where she continues to give back and make a difference.

Dr. Susan (Susie) Brigham is Professor in the Faculty of Education at Mount Saint Vincent University. Her research interests include adult education, teacher education, migration, diversity issues, Africentricity, and arts-based research methods. Susie has conducted research and presented her work in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Caribbean, and North America. Her co-edited books include *Adult Education and Learning in Canada: Advancing a Critical Legacy* (2020, Toronto: Thompson); *Building on Critical Traditions: Adult Education and Learning in Canada* (2013, Toronto: Thompson) and *Africentricity in Action* (2012, Halifax: Fernwood). She is associate editor with the *Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education* and for the *Alberta Journal of Educational Research (AJER)*. Susie is the mother of two amazing daughters. All three of them love to travel and explore the world together.

Dr. George Frempong is the inaugural Director of Research at the Delmore "Buddy" Daye Learning Institute (DBDLI), a unique Non-for-Profit Organization in Nova Scotia, Canada, with expertise in Africentric research. Over the past five years, he has provided exemplary leadership for the institute, developing Ubuntu-inspired vision and collaboration, leading to several transformative research initiatives. Dr. Frempong received his Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction, and his M.A. in Mathematics Education, both from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. Prior to obtaining these advanced degrees, he earned a B.Sc. in Physics from the University of Science and Technology in Ghana. Over the past three decades, he has worked as a classroom teacher, university professor and researcher with publications and related citations in accredited journals that have provided an understanding of how education systems should function to provide opportunities for all learners to succeed.

Hanseung Kim is currently serving as an educational research assistant at Mount Saint Vincent University, as well as an instructional designer at the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia. Holding a master's degree in education, She leverages her expertise to promote lifelong learning among racialized minority communities in Nova Scotia.

Dr. Deborah Toope is currently an assistant professor with the School of Education at Acadia University and has worked extensively in the public school system. She has a background in literacies and language arts, curriculum and instruction, inclusive practices, digital technologies for learning, assessment for learning, and collaborative action research. Working from a social justice perspective, her research interests centre on inclusive literacies, literacies and digital technologies, teachers' knowledge, teacher learning and action research methodologies.

Dr. Marie-Christina Edwards is a career-long educator with 30 years teaching and leadership experience in Canadian and Australian schools and more recently 5 years within university contexts. Marie is also a Self-Reg course facilitator and presenter for the MEHRIT Centre, supporting learners to develop their understanding of the brain/ body response to stress and apply this within their personal and professional contexts. Marie is passionate about bringing this Self-Reg lens to her research.

Darlene Barr has been a P-7 classroom teacher in the Annapolis Valley Regional Centre for Education (AVRCE) for 25 years. In the last 14 years, she has worked in P-2 classrooms as a teacher, math coach, literacy mentor, and integrated technology mentor. She has created content and provided literacy and technology professional learning sessions for teachers in the AVRCE over the last four years. In 2020, she initiated a culturally responsive book making project to create more local content for AVRCE students. She is currently in a P-5 literacy intervention and student-centred coaching position.

Nisha Langford is a grade primary classroom teacher at Aldershot Elementary School. Nisha has a BSc in Biology and a BEd in Elementary from Acadia University and an MEd in Curriculum Studies with a focus in Technology Integration from Mount Saint Vincent University. She lives in her hometown, Kentville with her husband, 8-year-old daughter, and one-year old pup, Dexter.

Emily Fultz graduated from Dalhousie University in June 2021 with a Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology and is currently a preservice teacher from Acadia University. Emily is delighted to be attending the 2023 Inter-University Research Network Symposium as a Research Assistant with the project Addressing the Achievement Gap: Engaging in Culturally Responsive Literacy Practices Through Reading and Writing Informational Texts Within Rural Place Context. This being her first time in the role of a Research Assistant, Emily looks forward to engaging in more research opportunities in the future which will enhance her impact as an educator in the classroom setting.

Dr. Jennifer Mitton is a Professor in the Faculty of Education at St. Francis Xavier University teaching preservice teacher education courses in secondary literacy and graduate courses in qualitative research methodologies. Prior to university teaching, she taught in secondary schools in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Turkey. Approaching research with a social justice mindset, her research interests include adolescent literacies, classroom assessment, and pedagogical practices that foster academic risk taking.

Dr. Jessie-Lee Mclsaac is an Assistant Professor within the Faculty of Education and Department of Child and Youth Study at Mount Saint Vincent University. Mclsaac holds a Tier II Canada Research Chair in Early Childhood: Diversity and Transitions and directs the Early Childhood Collaborative Research Centre (ECCRC). The goal of her mixed-methods research program is to engage families, and partners in policy and practice, in research to enhance early childhood well-being. One pillar of Mclsaac's research is to leverage family voice by considering how the social determinants of health influence families and a child's well-being. She holds a PhD in Public Health and an MSc in Health Promotion, both from the University of Alberta, and a BSc in Kinesiology from Dalhousie University.

Dr. Barb Hamilton-Hinch is the Assistant Vice Provost of Equity and Inclusion and an Associate Professor in the in the School of Health and Human Performance at Dalhousie University teaching in the Recreation and Leisure Studies Division as well as the Health Promotion Division. Dr. Hamilton – Hinch's work examines the impact of structural, systemic, and institutional racism on diverse populations, particularly people of African descent. Zhanna Barchuk is a Canadian Ukrainian professor in the Faculty of Education at Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Dr. Barchuk teaches in both the undergraduate (Bachelor of Education) and the graduate programs in the areas of curriculum studies, global education, and social studies. She holds a strong commitment to, and value for community development as way of living and working, and as a means toward local and

global change. Her scholarly agenda and her dedication to developing a diverse network of Canadian and global scholars and practitioners is evident in the publications that she has co-written and co-edited including the e-book series entitled International Conversations of Teacher Educators. She has conducted research and participated in various humanitarian, environmental, and educational projects in Canada, Ukraine, Saint Lucia, Spain, Poland, Moldova, Ecuador, Peru, and Kenya.

Milena Pimentel is a fourth-year undergraduate student in the Child and Youth Study program at Mount Saint Vincent University. Milena has been a Research Assistant with the Early Childhood Collaborative Research Centre (ECCRC) since 2019. She has a deep interest in advocating for equitable, diverse, inclusive, accessible, and culturally responsive early learning and childcare environments for young children. This stems from her personal experiences as an Afro-Latina and a daughter of immigrant parents. In addition to her work at the ECCRC, Milena has recently completed an Honours project titled 'Elevating the Voices of Black Early Childhood Educators: Telling the stories, experiences, and reflections of Black and African Nova Scotian Early Childhood Educators'. She has also recently been awarded a Scotia Scholar Award that will look at bridging the 'know-do' in culturally responsive practices among early childhood professionals in Nova Scotia.

Saturday, May 27, 2023

Dr. Jess Whitley's (Keynote Address) research and teaching focuses on inclusive education practice and policy, teacher preparation for inclusive education and the wellbeing of children and youth with mental health issues. She is currently a Professor of Inclusive Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa and Vice-Dean, Research and Professional Development. She is currently leading a three-year SSHRC-funded partnership grant focused on attendance, engagement, and mental health in collaboration with school boards and over a dozen community agencies. Jess is also conducting a three-year evaluation of the implementation of the Inclusive Education Policy in Nova Scotia with Dr. Andy Hargreaves.

Dr. Erin Robertson is an Associate Professor of Psychology at Cape Breton University. Erin received an IURN grant with co-investigator Dr. Kathy Snow who is now a Professor of Education at the University of Prince Edward Island. Darlene Bereta is a middle-school science teacher employed by the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional Centre for Education. She was a partner on this applied research project.

Jillian Polegato completed a Bachelor of Science in Psychology, a Master of Arts in Education, and a Bachelor of Education (Elementary), where she earned the Cape Breton University Silver Medal. She was a research assistant on this project and is currently teaching as a long-term substitute with the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional Centre for Education. Erin and Jillian will be presenting today on behalf of their team. Their talk is entitled “Using language to deconstruct barriers to science literacy”.

Martin Morrison is a member of the African Nova Scotian communities of Danvers and Southville and is the proud father of six children and one grandchild. Martin is currently an Assistant Professor at Mount Saint Vincent University and a two-time MSVU graduate, who holds a Master of Education in Lifelong Learning with a focus on Africentricity and a Bachelor of Education. As a current PhD candidate at MSVU, Martin’s dissertation explores the themes and characteristics of teachers who have been identified as being culturally responsive to the needs of African Nova Scotian learners by representatives of the community. He is also the recipient of an Inter-University Research Network Grant to support his research and a New Scholars grant through MSVU. Martin has 18 years of experience in education. He has worked as a program support assistant; secondary classroom teacher; principal; Regional Coordinator of Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding, and Human Rights; Regional Coordinator of African Nova Scotian Education; African Nova Scotian Corporate Strategist; and African Nova Scotian Regional Education Officer for the province. In addition, he has served on many boards and education committees in response to the systemic inequities experienced by members of the African Nova Scotian community, including the Black Educators Association, Delmore Buddy Daye Learning Institute, and local community education committees.

Mariam Elgendi is a third year Clinical Psychology PhD student at Dalhousie University working under the supervision of Dr. Hélène Deacon at the Language and Literacy Lab. I graduated with an honors degree in psychology from Dalhousie in 2020. She has a range of research interests that span areas such as childhood psychopathology, language and literacy and family systems. Her current research looks at children’s sentence level skills across the elementary years. Mariam is also interested in examining the impact of COVID-19 mandated homeschooling on parents and children.

Savannah Heintzman is a student in the Master of Science, experimental psychology, with the Language and Literacy Lab at Dalhousie University. Her master's research focuses on whether young children can learn the spellings and meanings of new words they encounter during shared book reading with an adult.

Sophie Bhaskara is an undergraduate summer research student in Dr. Helene Deacon's Language and Literacy Lab. Currently, she assists with studies related to shared book reading and children's orthographic knowledge. Sophie is entering her fourth year of her undergraduate degree in Neuroscience in the Fall. She is interested in cognition, development, and child psychology, and is planning to pursue a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology.

Shada Hamed is currently an undergraduate student at Dalhousie University entering in her third year of studies in Neuroscience and Statistics. She is currently completing a NSERC USRA in the Language and Literacy Lab. Her work involves supporting various ongoing projects in the lab, including Leaps & Bounds and the Shared Reading Study. She hopes that educators and researchers will be able to utilize this research to support children's language and literacy skills.

Jolena Klymyshyn is an undergraduate student finishing her last year of her honours in psychology with Dr. Deacon at the Language and Literacy Lab at Dalhousie University. Over the last year, she has been a research assistant involved in data collection, data entry, and analysis for numerous projects including "Leaps and Bounds: from reading words to understanding sentences" as well as "the power of children's learning in their reading". Jolena is continuing research into early orthographic knowledge and its role in reading development.

Dr. Mary Jane Harkins is the lead for this research team. Dr. Harkins is a Professor in the Faculty of Education and a Coordinator for Graduate Education Literacy programs at Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, NS. Previously, she was a school board administrator in southwest Nova Scotia. Her current research interests include accessible and inclusive pedagogy, language and literacy education, Indigenous knowledge and ways of learning, and school leadership from an Afrocentric Lens. Her film, *Sister Dorothy Moore: A Life of Courage, Determination and Love* was recently selected for screening at the Atlantic International Film Festival, 2022.

Dr. Barb Hamilton-Hinch is the Assistant Vice Provost of Equity and Inclusion and an Associate Professor in the in the School of Health and Human Performance at Dalhousie University teaching in the Recreation and Leisure Studies Division as well as the Health Promotion Division. Dr. Hamilton – Hinch’s work examines the impact of structural, systemic, and institutional racism on diverse populations, particularly people of African descent. Zhanna Barchuk is a Canadian Ukrainian professor in the Faculty of Education at Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Dr. Barchuk teaches in both the undergraduate (Bachelor of Education) and the graduate programs in the areas of curriculum studies, global education, and social studies. She holds a strong commitment to, and value for community development as way of living and working, and as a means toward local and global change. Her scholarly agenda and her dedication to developing a diverse network of Canadian and global scholars and practitioners is evident in the publications that she has co-written and co-edited including the e-book series entitled International Conversations of Teacher Educators. She has conducted research and participated in various humanitarian, environmental, and educational projects in Canada, Ukraine, Saint Lucia, Spain, Poland, Moldova, Ecuador, Peru, and Kenya.

Karen Hudson is from the community of Cherry Brook/ Lake Loon. She is an experienced and knowledgeable educator with over 28 years of educational training, currently she is the Principal of Auburn Drive High School with Halifax Regional Center for Education (HRCE). She is the creator and founder of the first Africentric Math and Literacy cohort in the province of Nova Scotia. In 2019, she was recognized nationally as one of Canada's Outstanding Principals for her work in embedding Africentric principles within the public school system by the Learning Partnership. She is featured in a publication authored by John Morrison, focusing on transformative and exceptional leadership. In April, she successfully completed her first year in the Nova Scotia Inter-University Doctoral Program in Educational Studies.

Dr. Zhanna Barchuk is a Canadian Ukrainian professor in the Faculty of Education at Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Dr. Barchuk teaches in both the undergraduate (Bachelor of Education) and the graduate programs in the areas of curriculum studies, global education, and social studies. She holds a strong commitment to, and value for community development as way of living and working, and as a means toward local and global change. Her scholarly agenda and her dedication to developing a diverse network of Canadian and global scholars and practitioners is evident in the publications that she has co-written and co-edited including the e-book series entitled International Conversations of Teacher Educators. She has conducted research and participated in various humanitarian, environmental, and educational projects in Canada, Ukraine, Saint Lucia, Spain, Poland, Moldova, Ecuador, Peru, and Kenya.

Dr. Késa Munroe-Anderson is a passionate, community-oriented educator, researcher, and change agent who practices an anti-racist and Africentric approach to leadership and education. Having served in various capacities of responsibility and leadership in government, non-profit organizations, and post-secondary institutions, she is currently Associate Professor in the School of Education at her alma mater, Acadia University. Here, Dr. Munroe-Anderson leads the school's new Master of Education in Inclusive Education - Equity and Social Justice cohorts designed to build and develop Nova Scotia's capacity of Equity and Social Justice leaders in education. She also serves on the School's Bachelor of Education program's Admissions Committee and teaches Bachelor of Education students. Dr. Munroe-Anderson was the recipient of the Harrison McCain Emerging Scholar Research Award in 2022 at Acadia University, a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's (SSHRC) Doctoral Award recipient for her Ph.D. research "Set Our Spirits Free: Exploring the role of spirituality as an anti-oppressive agent in the formal education of African Nova Scotian learners", and an IURN research grant recipient for "Bridging the Gap: Connecting spirituality and academic achievement for African Nova Scotian students". This educator believes wholeheartedly that "Until the lions have their own historians, the tale of the hunt will always glorify the hunter" (African Proverb). Therefore, she is energized by work that centers the voices and knowledge of African Nova Scotians, all people of African descent, and marginalized and equity deserving groups in a way that allows them to define themselves, speak for themselves, and be themselves in the fullness of their existence and potential.

Dr. Susan (Susie) Brigham is Professor in the Faculty of Education at Mount Saint Vincent University. Her research interests include adult education, teacher education, migration, diversity issues, Africentricity, and arts-based research methods. Susie has conducted research and presented her work in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Caribbean, and North America. Her co-edited books include *Adult Education and Learning in Canada: Advancing a Critical Legacy* (2020, Toronto: Thompson); *Building on Critical Traditions: Adult Education and Learning in Canada* (2013, Toronto: Thompson) and *Africentricity in Action* (2012, Halifax: Fernwood). She is associate editor with the *Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education* and for the *Alberta Journal of Educational Research (AJER)*. Susie is the mother of two amazing daughters. All three of them love to travel and explore the world together.

Denise Palmer, B.Ed. M.A., is a Ph.D. student in Educational Studies at Mount Saint Vincent University. She is a practicing grade 4 and 5 Math teacher at Elmsdale District School in the Chignecto-Central Regional Centre for Education. Denise has been a public-school teacher for 12 years and has experience teaching a wide variety of subjects and all grades from P-12. Her research focuses on teacher wellbeing and is framed by a positive psychological approach to maintaining wellness. She explores personal strategies, as well as institutional procedures and policies for optimal mental health and flourishing of both students and staff within the public-school setting. Denise lives in Lower Sackville, NS with her husband Adam, pre-teen daughter, Georgia, and a 2-year-old Standard Poodle named Lord Ira Palmerston.

Dr. Jamie Metsala is a Professor and the Gail and Stephen Jarislowky Chair in Learning Disabilities in the Faculty of Education at Mount Saint Vincent University. Her research and dissemination activities focus on equitable access to learning to read for all young children and youth, including those with or at risk for learning disabilities. She is a registered psychologist who previously held tenured faculty positions at the Universities of Maryland and Western Ontario. Dr. Metsala was one of two content area experts on the Ontario Human Rights Commission's Right to Read Public Inquiry and continues to consult as that province takes steps to implement recommendations from the 2022 Right to Read report.

Dr. Margaret David is the current Provincial Learning Disabilities Consultant at the EECD in Nova Scotia. Prior to coming to the EECD, Margaret has worked as a teacher and formerly as a school psychologist, as well as in educational research.

Dr. Christine Doe is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Canada. Her research examines the validity of language tests for multiple purposes as well as language use across different contexts, such as higher education and workplace settings. She was the lead researcher for a national evaluation project with the Government of Belize developing second language acquisition teaching strategies for Elementary and Junior level teachers. Dr. Doe has published articles in *Language Assessment Quarterly*, *English for Academic Purposes*, and *System*, as well as presented at international and national conferences. She teaches graduate and undergraduate courses focused on Teaching English as an Additional Language and Assessment in K-12 and adult learning settings.

Drs. Marc Husband and **Evan Throop Robinson** are professors in the Faculty of Education at St.FX University. Their research focuses on elementary mathematics education. Matthew Little is currently an elementary instructional mathematics coach for HRCE and is currently a graduate student studying mathematics education and community engagement. Together they investigate number talks in classrooms to bridge and research and practice.