A note from the Co-Chairs

March 12, 2020

Dear Nexus 2020 Attendees,

Welcome! We are thrilled that you are joining us for a celebration of scholarship in action.

This is our second year as co-chairs for the ISGP Nexus student conference. Last year, we took on the responsibility of planning the conference with the goal of showcasing different ways of sharing knowledge and elevating our interdisciplinary peers. This year, we took those goals further by eliminating traditional conference elements altogether. No posters. No stuffy presentations. No discipline-specific jargon.

Instead, our brave presenters will facilitate skills-building workshops, share TED-talk style stories, illustrate key findings with pechakuchas, and highlight lessons learned through rapid failing forward presentations. By ditching a traditional format, we are elevating examples of scholarship in action with active scholarship.

But, why does this matter anyway?

Too often, scholarship is inactive, inactionable, and inaccessible. When the story ends with a publication, the responsibility for change-making falls to someone else. But, the story doesn’t have to end there.

This year, we are celebrating dynamic graduate students who engage in public scholarship, solutions-oriented research, and/or knowledge translation. Our aim is to strengthen conversations about and communities of active scholarship to ensure that the future of research is active, useable, and responsible.

We invite you to lean in, work across, and act out.

Sincerely,

Maya Lefkowich & Jennica Nichols
Nexus 2020 Co-Chairs
Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program
Conference Planning Committee

Maya Lefkowich, Co-Chair
PhD Candidate, Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program
Public Scholar, UBC Public Scholars Initiative

Jennica Nichols, Co-Chair
PhD Candidate, Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program
Public Scholar, UBC Public Scholars Initiative

Dr. Barbara Weber
Director, Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program

Enid Ho
Program Coordinator, Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program

Michelle Zapiola
Program Assistant, Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program

A very special thank you to:

Rena Del Pieve Gobbi

The Graduate Student Society
Nicole Haylock, Ben Hill, Nicolas Romualdi & Vivian Tian

The Public Scholars Initiative
Serbulent Turan, Kaylee Byers, Andrea Johnson & Natalie Westwood

Peer Review Committee
Henry Lai, A. H. Christy, Callista Ottoni, Tawe Yeon & Markus Russin

Day of Volunteers
A. H. Christy, Saori Ogura, Callista Ottoni
Conference Schedule

NEXUS CONFERENCE
Scholarship [In] Action

9:00 am – 9:30 am  Registration & Refreshments

9:30 am – 9:45 am  Opening Remarks

9:45 am – 11:45 am  Doing Respectful Research  (From Graduate Research Foundations Series)
                    Janina Krabbe
                    Maria Angélica Guerrero-Quintana

11:45 pm – 12:45 pm  Lunch

12:45 pm – 2:45 pm  Option A:
                    Locating Your Self in your Research
                    Julia Santana Parrilla

                    Option B:
                    Theatre and Research:
                    Exploring Embodied Learning
                    Laen Hershler

2:45 pm – 3:00 pm  Coffee Break

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm  Option A:
                    Secrets from the blogosphere:
                    How to leverage social media to increase your professional network and research impact
                    Callista Ottoni

                    Option B:
                    Crafting your Research Story
                    AND implementation

4:00 pm – 4:20 pm  Closing
### Conference Schedule

**Scholarship [In] Action**


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<td>Dr. Susan Cox</td>
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Doing Respectful Research
Janina Krabbe & Maria Angélica Guerrero-Quintana
9:25 am – 11:45 am

If scholarship inaction is aided and abetted by scholars’ failure to grapple with their power, privilege, and positionality, this workshop aims to disrupt the cycle of inaction by thinking collaboratively across disciplines, contexts, and positions to promote reflective action. Building from the innovative workshop series piloted at UBC by the Dandelion Collective in Fall 2019 titled, “Graduate Research Foundations: Skills for Respectful Research” this workshop will engage participants through a series of interactive, arts-based exercises. The exercises are designed to be accessible for participants from all disciplinary backgrounds to spark curiosity and imagination around how research could be done differently and more respectfully. The facilitators will lead participants to collaboratively create an actionable vision. This process will involve group discussion, individual reflection, and negotiating with their neighbours around the table regarding how to implement the vision in their contexts. The conversations will uncover barriers, highlight sites of resilience, and identify supportive allies. Reflection and collaboration are key skills participants will get to practice as they think together about how to take scholarship into action. This workshop will not only imbue participants with necessary skills for actionable scholarship, the implementation of this workshop itself counteracts the cycle of scholarship inaction by generating reflective, collaborative scholars.

Locating Your Self in your Research
Julia Santana Parrilla
12:45 pm – 2:25 pm (Option A)

Graduate student status has been associated with decreasing mental health. Often, feelings of restlessness, aimlessness, inadequacy, and isolation can undermine our decision-making with significant implications to our selves, our work, and those impacted by it. In Locating your Self in your research, attendees will engage in embodied and reflexive practices to inform individualized Researcher Self-Checks that enhance self-compassion, agency, and accountability in personal and professional goals. In our time together, we will draw our attention from what we’re doing to who we’re become as students and agents within a system that contributes to much ill-being. The purpose being to acknowledge how we feel and use it to inform our work in meaningful ways.
Theatre and Research: Exploring Embodied Learning
Laen Hershler
12:45 pm – 2:25 pm (Option B)

Embodied learning makes connections between mental images, bodily sensations, and physicality. By learning through the body, we can access relational and situated understanding of topics that otherwise are hidden. Using embodied exercises provides opportunities to gain novel insights and shared understandings in ways words alone cannot. This interactive workshop will introduce participants to techniques for using embodied activities within research contexts. At the end of the workshop, participants will have the ability to use several techniques within their work. No experience is necessary and a particular focus will be given to the world of graduate students. The workshop will be facilitated by Laen, who is a performing artist and UBC graduate student. He is also an expert facilitator of creative processes across professional and non-professional contexts. He has experience working with teachers, academics, business professionals using theatre for both professional and personal development (Canada, France, Korea, Australia, Kenya, South Africa). Since 2011, he has been an sessional instructor at the Creative Studies Faculty at UBC (Kelowna) and the Education Faculty at UBC (Vancouver). Most recently, Laen has devoted considerable time to graduate work in the field of Research–Based Theatre.

Secrets from the blogosphere:
How to leverage social media to increase your professional network and research impact
Callista Ottoni
3:00 pm – 4:00 pm (Option A)

Twitter is not just for sharing photos of duck lips and dancing dogs. When used strategically, you can increase the profile of your research, and even the number of citations of your published articles. In this workshop, Callista Ottoni, past-Social Media Manager for the British Journal of Sports Medicine (Global field leader with 69K Twitter followers) offers practical tips for blogging and Twitter. As she will explain, the two-platforms are mutually reinforcing. This workshop will address: 1. Blog basics, 2. Secret formulas for blog/lay article audience engagement, and 3. Twitter dos and don’ts. Participants will transform a topic from their research interests into an outline for a catchy blog, and brainstorm avenues for online networking and dissemination. Participatory in nature, come with your burning questions and Callista will incorporate those into the session. Content will be relevant for individuals across all disciplines.
Crafting your Research Story

**AND implementation**

3:00 pm – 4:00 pm (Option B)

Do you get frazzled when someone asks you what you study? Is it difficult to identify the most important part of your work because *everything* is important? Does your mom still not understand what it is that you actually do?

It happens to the best of us! Grad school is great for teaching us to study important things in complex ways. But, it is terrible for teaching us how to communicate our work and generate interest beyond our niche departments. By crafting a research story, we can do a better job of getting our audiences to understand and care. In this skills-building workshop, attendees will develop the knowhow to: 1) tailor their scholarship to diverse audiences, 2) synthesize and organize key messages, and 3) centre themselves as effective protagonists in their stories.

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**Abstracts: Creative Presentations**

March 13, 2020

**Chemistry in the Real World**

*Riley Petillion*

Some of the world’s largest problems today include climate change, preservation of nature, food and health security, sanitation, medicine, and much more. These issues, if they remain unaddressed, will continue to exacerbate and lead to displacement, disease, and death. These and other global issues have recently been delineated by the United Nations, and a set of goals, The UN Sustainable Development Goals, has been established as a framework for a sustainable planetary society. A handful of these goals are ultimately a product of chemical transformation and can equally be solved through chemistry. However, looking at a typical post-secondary introductory chemistry curriculum, we find isolated and disparate topics with seemingly absent connections to real-world issues. At UBC’s Okanagan campus, we are undertaking a complete content and delivery reform of the introductory chemistry curriculum. Using the UN Sustainable Development Goals as a framework for the curriculum and various active learning strategies, we aim to transform the way students understand and appreciate chemistry. This talk will speak to the issues our global society faces today, and how the way we teach chemistry can be a stepping stone towards solving these problems.

Professional Development for Science Teachers: Implementation through rural reconstruction movement
Gerald Tembrevilla

The 2018 World Bank Report cited that many of educational technology interventions in education fail or stumble badly before being implemented. One reason connected to this failure is not focusing on technologies that are realistically feasible in current and existing systems. Viewed through rural reconstruction movement framework, a professional development for and by the science teachers was introduced after considering the actual needs of select rural junior high school science teachers in southern Philippines. With the assistance from UBC Public Scholars Initiative and Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy, I went back to my former high school and nearby rural schools to conduct science video creation workshops. Teachers created a 3–5 minute science video incorporating funds of knowledge of students and the immediate community with science concepts. Applied in education, funds of knowledge involve the cultural experiences and identities of students, parents, teachers where the place of learning is taking place. These funds of knowledge have been used to overcome differing perspectives in education and enhance relationships between schools and families. Science teachers’ experiences and challenges on the use of educational technology and integration of funds of knowledge in rural schools as a form of a professional development to improve students’ science literacy and argumentation skills will be discussed through a pechakucha presentation. The discussion will end on the importance of matching professional development programs and institutional policy with the current realities of rural schools and rural school teachers.

An arts–based approach to community revitalization of Indigenous small grains
Saori Ogura

Indigenous knowledge and traditional practices around indigenous small grains are critical tools in the quest to improve food sovereignty and to adapt to climate change. As a scholar and an artist, I work with Indigenous communities in Sikkim in the Indian Himalayas and in Mazvihwa, Zimbabwe, documenting Indigenous small grains using arts–based methodologies, such as drawing. In Sikkim, I documented 36 neglected traditional food plants, including 16 traditional cultivated crops such as millet and rice varieties, and 20 gathered plants, representing 14 different plant families. In Mazvihwa, I conducted drawing workshops, created an opportunity for community members to reconnect to the neglected plants, and provided a space for the elders to talk about the plants with the youth. My project builds a collective community resource as communities reflect on their traditional skills and knowledge around neglected small grains, contributing to maintaining agricultural biodiversity and in improving their food sovereignty.

Professional Development for Science Teachers: Implementation through rural reconstruction movement

[Image]
How Critique to my Masters paved the way to my PhD journey  
Nashwa Moheyeldine Khedr

The 25th January Egyptian Revolution opened up spaces for civic action and revealed the diverse perceptions of citizenship adopted by Egyptians. My master’s thesis aimed to explore the notions of citizenship and critical consciousness among students, which is a precursor to critical action, or praxis (Freire, 2000) at four secondary schools: public, experimental, private, and international schools. The presentation not only analyzes the influence of citizenship education at the school, but also attempts to investigate other external factors such as student’s socioeconomic level, the impact of the Revolution and social media. My Masters research builds on and engages with typologies of citizens proposed by Banks (2008), and Westheimer and Kahne (2004). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a total of forty participants. My findings showed that critical reflection didn’t always lead to critical action due to various social and political reasons, which Freire himself admitted that he had mistakenly assumed that developing critical consciousness would necessarily move people to action. (Freire, 1992). However, after graduating with my Masters degree, I received a critique at an international conference of the Western frameworks I worked with. This urged me to review my work. The emerging themes indicate the crucial need to construct a new typology for non-Western, post revolutionary contexts. A contextually-relevant citizenship typology is suggested in light of the socio-political context. Despite being frustrated at first, as a result, I wrote a chapter that includes a proposed non-Western framework, and a month later I was accepted for a PhD program at UBC.

Quitting for Clarity  
Susan Sechrist

My father gave me a profound piece of advice when I was 18 and feeling ashamed because I had just dropped out of college: “Never be afraid to quit.” This from a man who is the model of stable persistence and responsible patience, a man I look up to because of his reliable trustworthiness, work ethic, and sense of duty. My failure – leaving college after only one lackluster semester – felt enormous and definitive and unsurmountable. My father’s words, “never be afraid to quit,” gave me a new perspective on my decision to leave college. My failure became a choice, maybe a risky one, maybe a hasty one, maybe one with unintended consequences, but my choice all the same. From my lonely low point, I watched my more well-adjusted and ambitious friends go on with their studies while I floundered. But, over time, my failure became an opportunity to ask deeper questions about my identity and my goals. Why had I gone to college in the first place? Because I was a smart kid, and everyone expected it. Truth was, I had no idea what I expected from an education. Having the courage to quit, to challenge other people’s expectations, was humbling – I had to admit that I didn’t know what I wanted; but it was ultimately empowering for the same reason: saying “I don’t know” rather than demurring to someone else’s known was the point at which I began to see my own potential more clearly.
Terminology Matters! Challenging How We Talk About 2SLGBTQ+ Individuals. 

Rodney Stehr

The usage of terms like “who have sex with men” (MSM) and “gay and bi men who have sex with men” (gbMSM) have historically been used in public health discourse as a way to focus on the behaviours of individuals, and the associated risk related to their behaviours, without bringing sexual and gender identity into the mix. The utility of these terms as a “neutral” way to target a sub-population has resulted in the near terminological lock-in of MSM and gbMSM in the field. In this TED talk, I will describe the inadvertent harms that come from using so-called “neutral” biomedical language as a gold standard. Drawing from the initial findings from a qualitative sub-study I am co-leading at the BC Centre on Substance Use (BCCSU), I hope to show how this lock-in continues to concentrate intervention efforts and resources among cisgender bisexual and gay masculine-identified individuals at the expense of non-binary and trans experiences. This presentation will challenge the audience to think about how we can use interdisciplinarity to topple terminology that is widely used and is believed to have significant utility, especially when these very same terms reduce queerness to risk behaviours and separate it from its social context, and erase the experiences of other sexual and gender minorities who continue to be under-served and persecuted within healthcare systems.

Reconsidering Our Approaches to Interdisciplinary Education

Dr. Derek Gladwin

This “Ted Talk” style aims to address the potential benefits and challenges of interdisciplinary education, particularly when engaging with a range of methodologies, theories, pedagogies, or modes of thinking. One of the benefits of interdisciplinary education involves integrating knowledge and methods from two or more disciplines to arrive at new findings. One of the challenges of interdisciplinarity is compartmentalizing discrete, yet complementary concepts into a cohesive result. Interdisciplinarity is inherently boundary breaking and increases potential friction between knowledge production and institutional structures. Outlining three basic factors that contribute toward teaching and researching interdisciplinary education, this talk discusses how we might understand, use, and develop effective models of interdisciplinary education (including transdisciplinary, cross disciplinary, intradisciplinary, and multidisciplinary models). In doing so, this talk invites audiences to understand ourselves in relation to the subjects and themes that underscore our work. This talk will ultimately answer the following question: How can the practice of interdisciplinarity affect your research, teaching, or studies?
So you want to be a Concert Pianist?
Benjamin Hopkins

It’s normal for classical musicians to spend six months or a year preparing for a big competition or an audition. Normal to have half a dozen rejection letters per season, and downright pedestrian to be cut after first rounds year after year. “You only need to win one,” is what we tell ourselves. That big break is right around the corner, and that’s why we keep trying. Failure in the form of not winning that competition or audition is normal. It’s disappointing when you don’t win, but you learn how to control your facial expressions at the awards ceremony so that nobody knows just how crushed you feel. It’s a small world, and you don’t want to get a reputation as a poor sport. When it’s all over, you go home with anonymity and dignity, keeping your feelings of failure to yourself. But what happens when your biggest failure is broadcast not only to the entire music community, but to the entire world? What happens when you wake up the morning after and read your name in an article on the BBC and it quite literally tells the entire world you were “not good enough to win?”

Leaving the Lab: A Failing Forward Reflection on Qualitative Research
Jens Vent–Schmidt

Canada has the highest numbers of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) globally. Symptoms are caused by flares of inflammation and are life changing. There is no cure available and therapies have many side effects. In my PhD, I developed a potential therapy which involves a novel technology pioneered in cancer immunotherapy. The risk associated with this therapy is comparable with current standard of care therapies in IBD. However, the treatment is conceptually and logistically complex, which might increase perceived risk. Before continuing therapy development, it was important to understand the willingness of people living with IBD, to accept this therapy. To answer this question, I designed an educational analogy and a draft survey. I then conducted two iterative focus groups to learn patient’s perspectives on the therapy and to get feedback on the draft survey. I revised the survey based on my reflections and notes taken during the focus groups. A total of 594 participants completed the survey. The vast majority (95%) indicated willingness to try this new therapy if it was shown to be safe and effective. Furthermore, 85% indicated they would consider enrolling in a phase 2/3 clinical trial. To understand why people indicated willingness to try, the survey featured open ended clarification questions following each willingness question. In my preliminary inductive thematic analysis I found many themes that I also found in the focus groups transcripts.
Flipping the script on power dynamics in journalism: The Recovery Project
Logan Turner

Let’s start with the premise that journalism has been, and often still is extractive. And if we’re being honest, so is academia. Despite all our talk about the public good, journalistic practices have caused tremendous harm. Editorial independence is proclaimed as a cornerstone of good journalism, and indeed protecting journalists from the implicit and explicit influences of governments, corporations and other actors is important. But this principle also puts a lot of power in the court of the journalist, and has led to too many people and communities being misrepresented and harmed by their interactions with journalists. The digital age has spawned new ways for multiple publics to hold the journalists themselves to account and to demand a more inclusive journalism, one that is attentive to issues of race, gender and colonialism. Building on work and approaches by faculty, staff and students at the UBC School of Journalism, 'The Recovery Project' is an attempt at rebalancing the power in the relationship between journalists and the "subjects" and to co-create a multimedia journalism work that simultaneously explores conversations of collaboration and ownership within the field of journalism studies.

The Resilience to Failing at Resilience
Mike Unrau

During a pre-dissertation research project overseas, the entire country's economy came to a halt. My project was on “resilience,” however, I suddenly realised my resilience strategy was non-resilient, and my ability to navigate the ensuing cultural challenges caused my research to decline in efficacy and ability. What did I learn about resilience that could have helped? Scale, change, and function. According to resilience theory, resilience addresses these three things. Yet, I also learned that these three things not only applied to my project, but also to me. Join me in learning about resilience to failure as it applies to project and people.

Portrayal without betrayal – respectful representation in research
Maria Chen
The Nexus team is excited to welcome Rena back for a second year as the poetic respondent. At the end of the conference, Rena will share reflections, lessons learned, and a summary of the wisdom generated in the room through poetry. This unique and important contribution to the conference highlights active scholarship and creative ways of sharing learning out.

Del Pieve Gobbi is a third year Interdisciplinary studies PhD Student at the University of British Columbia. Her research is in psychiatry, psychology and education researching stigma and resilience in regards to persons with mental health disabilities in university. Del Pieve Gobbi brings experience in mental health, fine arts and storytelling to bear in her work in her art-based research and curriculum development. Del Pieve Gobbi is the editor of the ISGP student-run journal, Cutting Edge. In 2016 she taught a photography course to students with disabilities culminating in an exhibition: Insight’s Unseen and Unheard: ‘our UBC’ and in 2017 presented “When Mental Health and Education Collide: there is no reason to stop Dancing” at the 5th EDCP Graduate Students Conference: The Tangle and/or Tango of Curriculum and Pedagogy. In 2019 she presented at Congress. In 2020 Del Pieve Gobbi had her first article published (second author), ‘Rippling excesses: a/r/toography becoming dis/a/r/toography’ with Leslie Roman, Jonas-Sébastien Beaudry, and Persimmon Blackbridge in The International Journal of Education Through Art.
Thank you for attending Nexus 2020
We look forward to seeing you again in 2021

For any questions, please contact nexus.isgp@gmail.com